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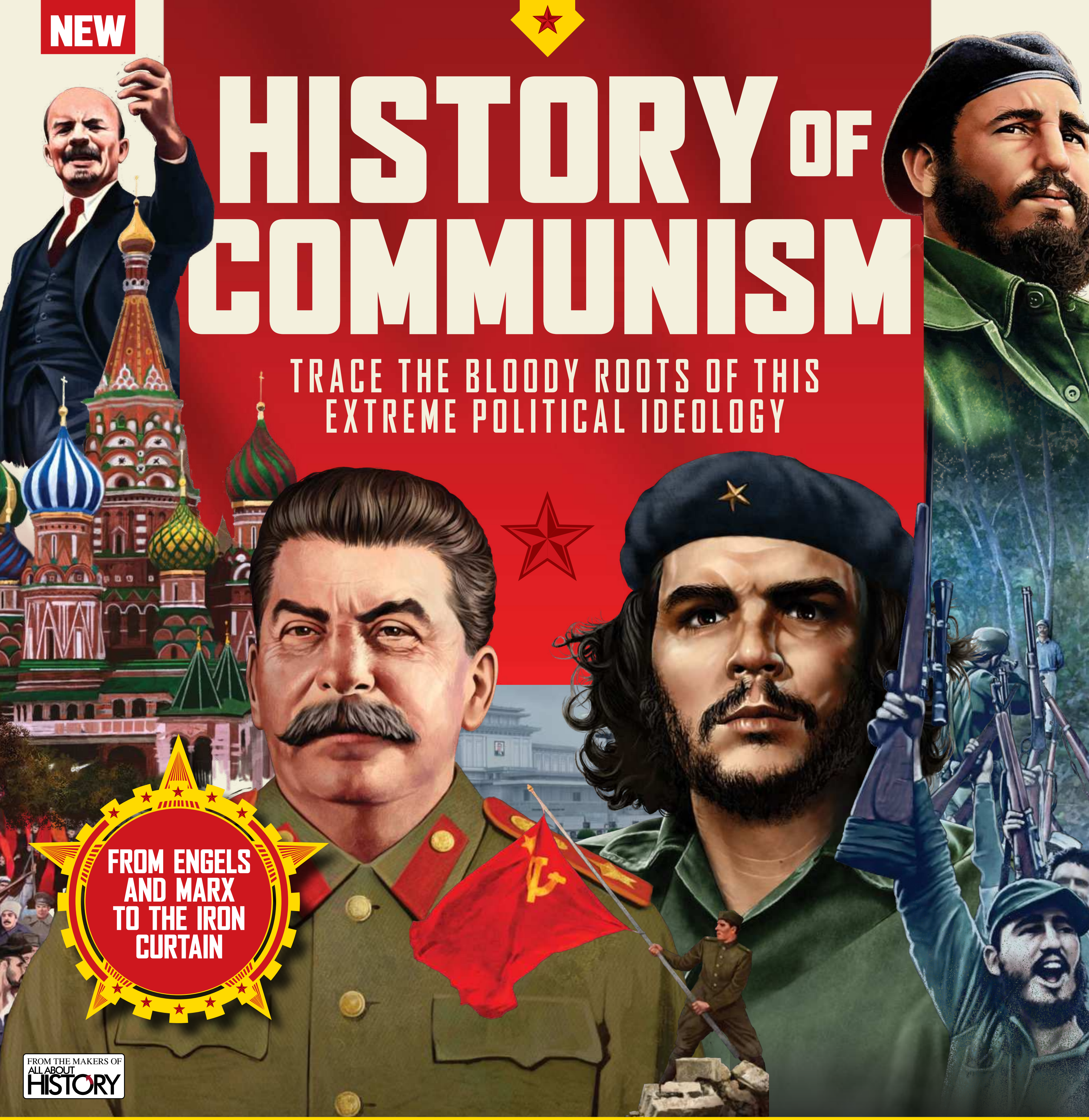

HISTORY OF COMMUNISM

TRACE THE BLOODY ROOTS OF THIS EXTREME POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

FROM ENGELS AND MARX TO THE IRON CURTAIN

FROM THE MAKERS OF ALL ABOUT HISTORY

Digital Edition

FUTURE

SIXTH EDITION

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HISTORY OF COMMUNISM

"A spectre is haunting Europe - the spectre of communism." When Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels wrote those words in 1848, they were acknowledging that their newly minted social and economic philosophy was already seen as a threat to the capitalist world. They were right. Communism has incited revolutions, toppled regimes, started wars, and fallen itself. But in a 21st-century world of populist politics, will it rise again?

FUTURE

HISTORY OF COMMUNISM

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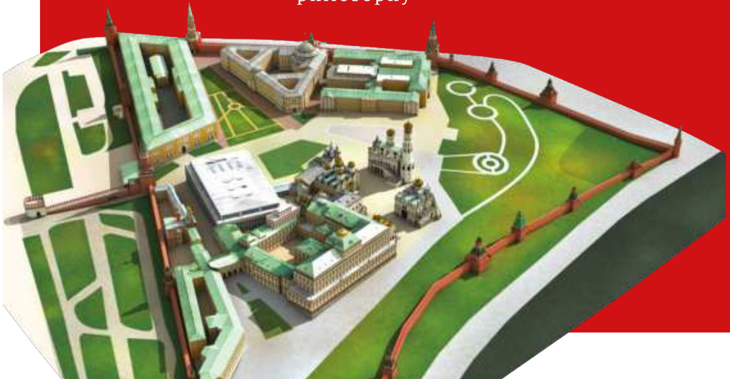

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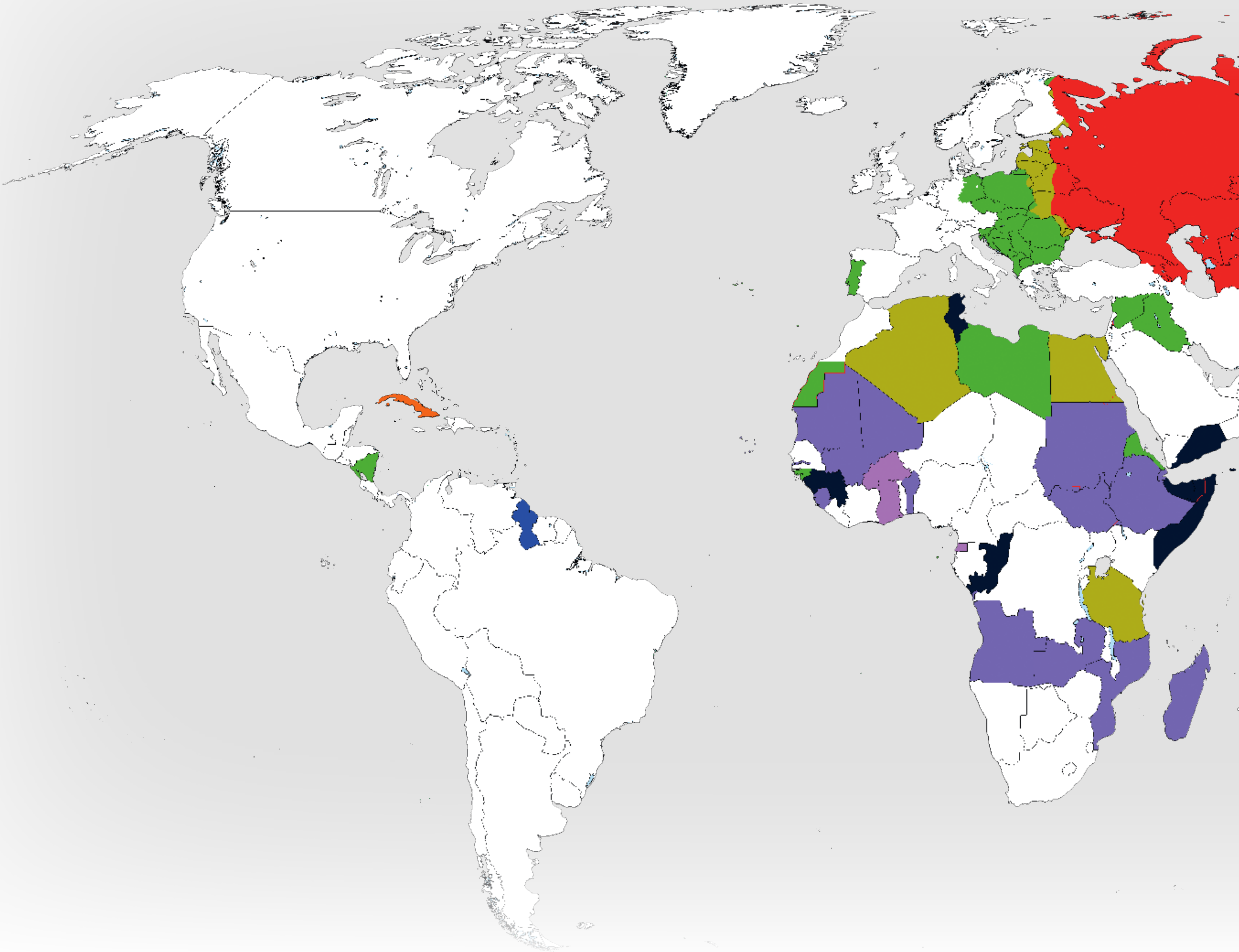
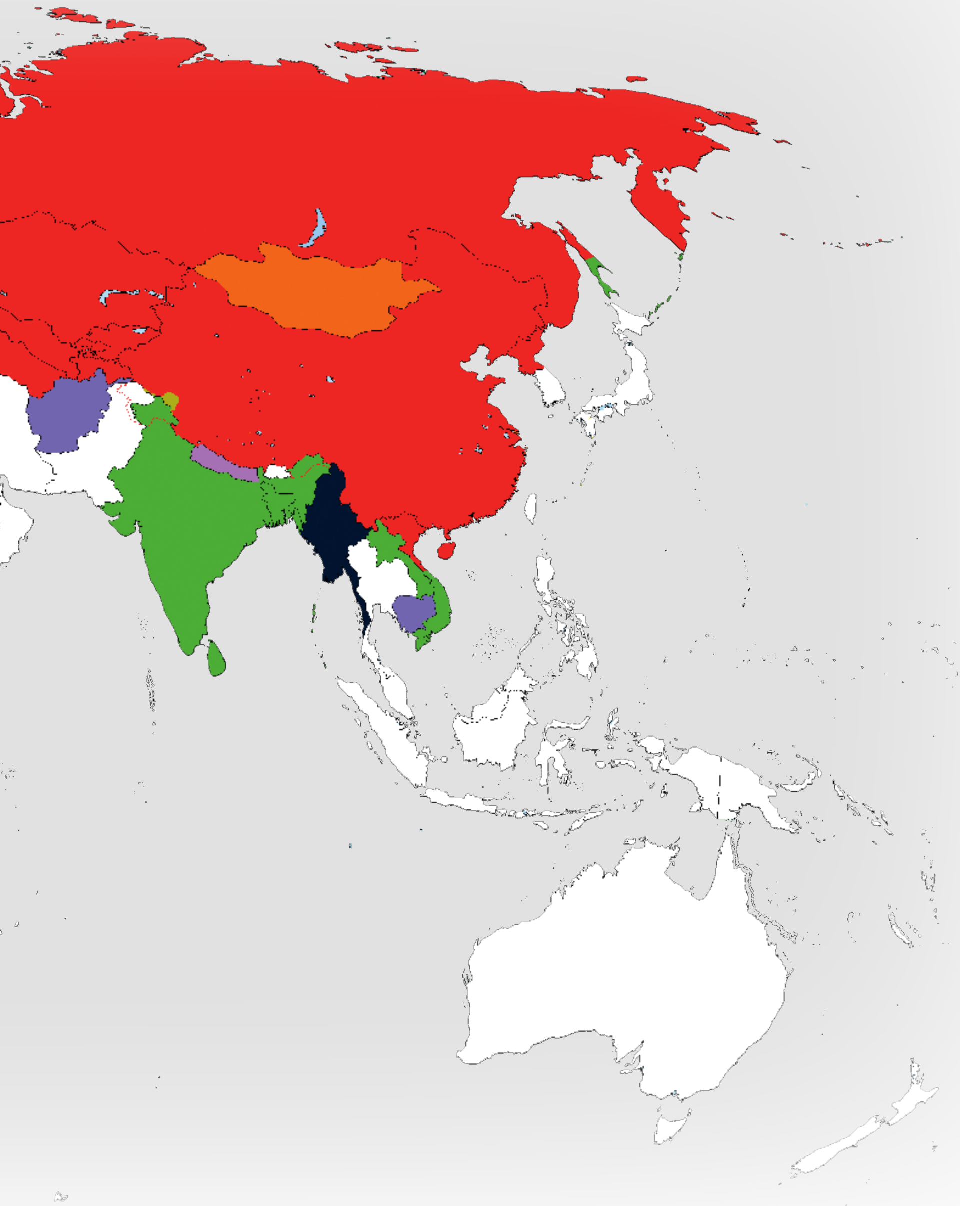


CURRENT AND FORMER
COMMUNIST STATES

Countries that are, or were formerly, governed by
socialist or Marxist-Leninist governments

MAP OF SOCIALIST STATES BY DURATION



Countries that are, or were, governed by socialist parties based on Marxist-Leninist principles are often referred to by other nations as "communist states"; however they tend to self-identify as working towards implementing true communism rather than having achieved it yet.

There are currently four states in the world that define themselves as socialist working towards the communist ideal: the Republic of Cuba, in the Caribbean; the Lao People's Democratic Republic (commonly known as Laos) in Southeast Asia, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, also in Southeast Asia, and the People's Republic of China, in East Asia. Meanwhile, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (known as North Korea), in East Asia, follows its own unique slant on communism, called Juche, which has been stripped of Marxist-Leninist elements. The transcontinental Russian Federation, which straddles Eastern Europe and Northern Asia and was the world's first and most well-known communist state, began to reject communism during the 1980s, and in 1991 the former Soviet Union was dissolved. The Russian Federation now defines itself as a representative democracy.

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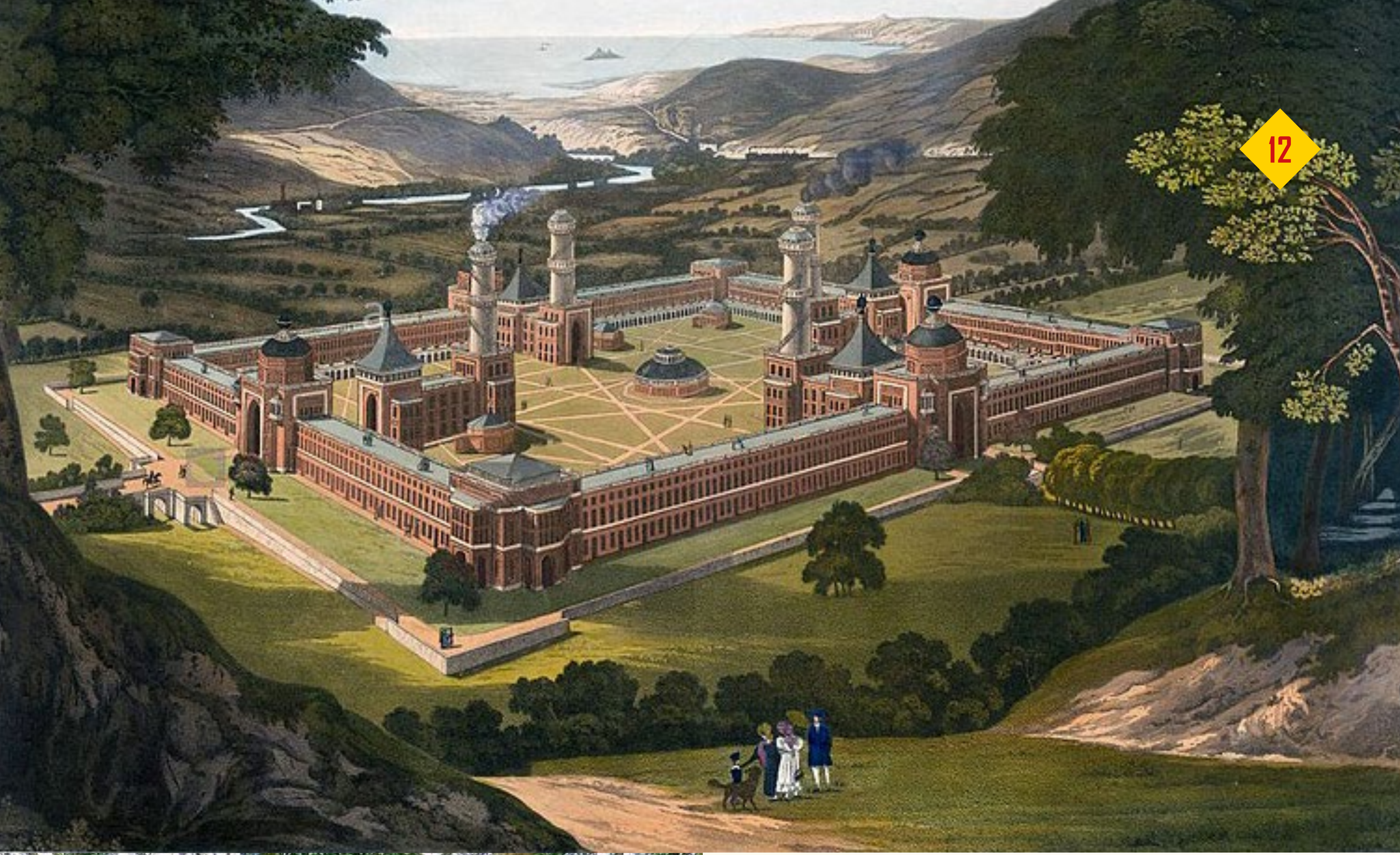

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WORKERS OF ALL LANDS
UNITE
KARL MARX
THE PHILOSOPHERS HAVE ONLY
INTERPRETED THE WORLD
VARIOUS WAYS — THE POINT
HOWEVER IS TO CHANGE IT

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The Essenes were a 2nd century BCE group who lived and shared resources communally, as in this building in Qumran, on the West Bank of the River Jordan

EXPERIMENTS IN EARLY COMMUNISM

Communism did not originate with Marx; rather, he developed ideas that had existed for centuries

WRITTEN BY PENNY WILSON

Long before it formed as an economic programme, communism cropped up in various forms throughout history. Long ago in Greece, Pythagoras the Ionian philosopher required that his followers live alongside him in one building with all possessions held in common, for he said that true equality could only be achieved under these circumstances. There was even an oft-repeated maxim, allegedly uttered for the first time by the man himself: "All things are in common among friends."

Classical historians such as Iamblichus tell us that the followers of Pythagoras not only held their possessions in common, but ate together in communal fashion, devoted themselves to the membership alone and tended to shun and exclude outsiders. Somewhat unusually - but in line with what we recognise as a communist tenet today - it seems possible that Pythagoras believed in the education and advancement of women and made room for them in his school of philosophy. In this, he may have been influenced by being the father (perhaps) of the philosopher Miya, herself held in regard in the Pythagorean School and believed to have been a leader among women there.

As is the case in many societies, there were requirements for not only membership among the Pythagoreans, but also for the honour of meeting Pythagoras himself, who was held up as a virtually godlike being, believed to have been set upon the Earth for the enlightenment of others. It might be said then that the Pythagoreans were more of a cult of one man's personality and philosophy that lived together with some early communist ideals, perhaps set in place to control and guide the membership.

This is but one example of a form of communism existing in a limited community over a relatively short period of time, and there are many more stories that could be told of similar groups living in similar ways over the few thousand years between the days of Pythagoras and today.

In the early 19th century, a form of pre-Marxist European communism arrived in America, and on 15 February 1805, a band of immigrants from Germany established the Harmony Society with all adult members - male and female - signing the Articles of Association, in which they agreed to place all their individual goods in common usage. This included household goods and furnishings, tools and firearms, livestock, and $23,000 in capital which was used to purchase land. Together, the Harmonists founded three model towns dedicated to their beliefs: Harmony and Economy (now called Ambridge), Pennsylvania, and New Harmony, Indiana.

Unlike what we - in modern times - accept as basic communist ideals, the settlers of Harmony Society communities maintained religious beliefs based in the Lutheranism of their German home, as filtered through the philosophy of their founder, Johann Georg Rapp (1757-1847). Many of these beliefs would be recognisable to present-day Lutherans, but they also included a ban on tobacco and a pervasive commitment to celibacy. This last was not a belief held by every member, but the fact that many did adhere to it meant that the birth rate in these towns was extremely low, and that the membership relied heavily on recruiting new members rather than raising them.

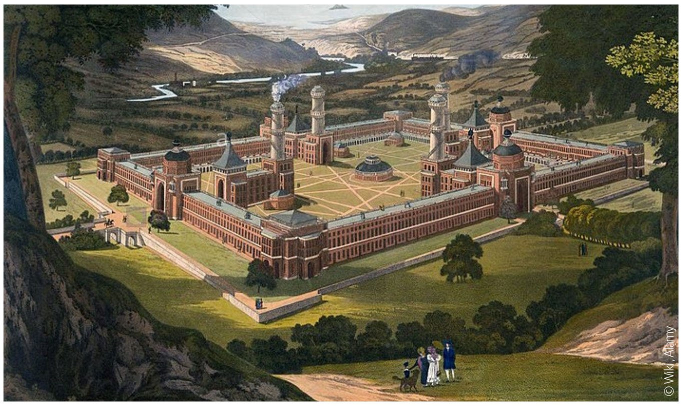
The membership pledged additionally to uphold some very idealistic articles of association. They promised to receive no pay for their work and contributions to the community, but in return they were promised care and maintenance when they were unable to work through age, injury or infirmity. This ideal can easily be recognised in the 1875 Marxist slogan, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs." And longer ago still - to add back in some religiosity - some Bible scholars trace the origin of this concept, Marxist though we call it, to the Acts of the Apostles: "...allotment was made to every man according to his needs."

The Harmonists also promised to allow those who wanted to leave their community to depart with either everything they arrived with (sans interest) or, if they arrived with nothing, a small amount of money to speed them on their way. Again, the ability to leave the collective is not something that we have experienced with more modern experiments in communism. This was, however, a useful tool for society members as the group descended into factional disagreement in the 1830s and a good number of them departed. Celibacy and increased isolationism both decimated the Harmony Society's membership, and by 1903, there were only three members left. The Society was then dissolved. But all things do come to an end, and it may well be concluded that this particular attempt at communism on American soil was reasonably successful.

1910
HARMONIE BIER
Sara's Harmonie Way

Harmony Society buildings in New Harmony, Indiana. Many of the Harmonist buildings have been restored

© Wiki, Chris Flook



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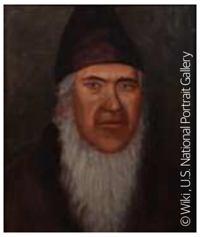
JOHANN GEORG RAPP

Rapp founded the Harmonist Society, which lived a communal life in the early 19th century



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Johann Georg Rapp was born on 1 November 1757 in Iptingen, in the Duchy of Württemberg. As a young man he was inspired by the philosophers Jakob Böhme and Emanuel Swedenborg and by the early 1780s, he'd gathered a group of supporters. Generally, his group were Pietists, or people who dedicated themselves to living ideal lives, based on strict Biblical doctrine.

In 1785, Rapp and his followers broke with the Lutheran Church, and were thereafter banned by the civic leaders of Iptingen from meeting at all. Rapp's group soon grew to number in the thousands, and in 1798 they refused to serve in the military or attend Lutheran schools. The government of Württemberg began to recognise them as significant danger to social order and attempted to bring them back in line by arresting Rapp in 1802 and confiscating his library of Separatist books.

On his release in 1803, Rapp gathered his followers and together they decided that they should pool their assets and leave Germany for life in the United States, where they believed that they would be able to live privately and as they wished without governmental persecution.

Rapp died in Pennsylvania on 7 August 1847.

"THE ESSENES REFUSED THE CONCEPT OF OWNERSHIP, EITHER OF SLAVES OR OF PROPERTY"

Pythagoreans Celebrate Sunrise, Feodor Bronnikov, 1869

© Wiki, Fyodor Bronnikov, (1827–1902)

Another perhaps more successful - and certainly longer-lived - group who lived by what we might recognise as communist standards were the Essenes. The historian Josephus is probably the best chronicler of the movement. They were a sizeable Jewish sect living in Judea and seemingly concentrated along the shores of the Red Sea in the 300 or so years between 200 BCE and 100 CE. Records show that these people lived in groups in various cities and villages and devoted themselves to charitable working, general benevolence, aestheticism and celibacy in their priestly members. They lived together, and though they scattered throughout the immediate area for work, they gathered for prayer times and meals, and engaged in ritual bathing in the mornings. The Essenes refused the concept of ownership, either of slaves or of property, and so they set themselves apart from the usual business of producing and trading, giving themselves over to serving one another and outsiders in need.

Many communist societies through the centuries have had a strong leaning towards the tenets of Judeo-Christian religions. There are even historians and philosophers who assert that in its purest form, Christianity itself is nothing more than the communist ideal, with Jesus Christ himself attributed as the first communist. It is hard to deny this concept completely, and indeed, in his earliest writings, Karl Marx sought to reconcile this philosophical parallel thusly: "As Christ is the intermediary onto whom man unburdens all his divinity, all his religious bonds, so the state is the mediator onto which he transfers all his Godlessness, all his human liberty."

Clearly this is an attempt by Marx to separate religious life from secular life, allowing the two to exist side by side. He grew to view religion as a protest by the working classes against their economic conditions and their societal alienation. He would later seek to find examples of what he called "primitive communism" in various tribal societies, which appeared to exist as socioeconomic entities without religion intruding.

Generally, primitive communism is defined as the 'gift economy' of hunter-gatherer societies where groups exchange among themselves in order to meet their needs. Because this system produced no surplus, there was not only no capitalism, but also no property outside of the basic clothing necessary for warmth and tools for performing one's function within the community. It is argued that primitive communism ended when animals were domesticated and vegetables, grains and other plants were cultivated on land - which all became property. From there arose the concept of ownership, slavery, trade, property and class.

Both an ancient and modern example of a hunter-gatherer society is the group living in extremely isolated fashion on North Sentinel Island in the Bay of Bengal. This society is mostly believed to have existed on this island for something in the region of 60,000 years, but it is also possible that the group's ancestors arrived there more recently from one of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. North Sentinel Island falls under the ownership of India, but the Indian government does not interact with the group, nor do they allow others to do so, having established a three-mile safety zone around the island. The people of North Sentinel Island have shown themselves to be extremely aggressive in their desire to be left alone.

It is known that the North Sentinelese practise a kind of primitive anarcho-communism. Through off-shore observation and several anthropological expeditions through the 1970s and into the 1990s, scientists were able to conclude that all property is held collectively, that there is no apparent hierarchy, and that both male and female members of the community control the means of production in apparent agreement. It was observed that on occasion, such as that of a shipwreck being dismantled, friendly relations could be established if the North Sentinelese were able to participate in the acquiring of metal pieces and fruit. All commodities thus collected went toward the community in the form of food and produced weaponry.

The North Sentinelese were briefly in the news in 2018, as a Christian missionary unwisely landed on the island intending to interfere with the group's lifestyle. The man was killed, and his body was left on the island after attempts to recover it were determined to be too dangerous. It is an interesting parallel that the longest-lived arguably communist society on earth has isolated itself from the world, much as the Soviet Union itself did, behind the Iron Curtain.

THE LIFE OF KARL MARX

Karl Marx, philosopher and revolutionary,
was also a son, husband and father

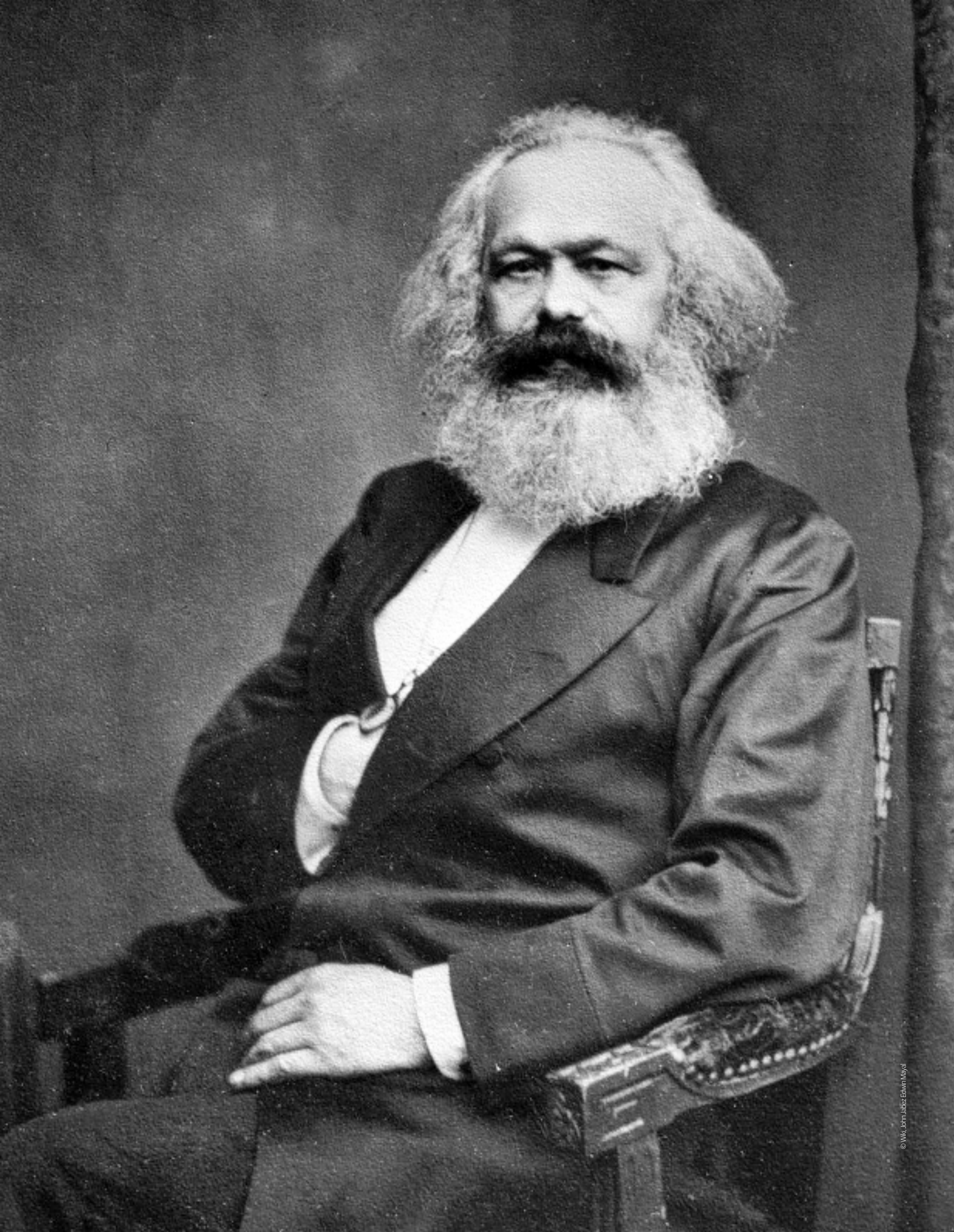
WRITTEN BY PENNY WILSON

Karl Heinrich Marx was born in Trier, in the German Rhineland, in 1818. He was the eldest surviving son in a family of nine children. His parents, the German Heinrich Marx and Dutch Henriette Pressburg, were both born Jewish, but Heinrich was a lawyer, and in order to work - because of Prussia's anti-Jewish laws - he was baptised as a Christian about 18 months before Karl was born. Karl himself would be baptised into the same church in 1824. Henriette converted in 1825, following the death of her father.

Heinrich Marx was a man of Enlightenment ideals: he read both Kant and Voltaire and worked actively for Prussian reform, particularly the establishment of a constitution. He also sent his son Karl to the Friedrich-Wilhelm Gymnasium, a high school where the headmaster was a friend of Heinrich and a fellow devotee of Kant. Heinrich found the school to his political tastes, but the authorities plainly did not. The Friedrich-Wilhelm was under government surveillance, and was raided by the police in 1832, while young Karl was a student there.

Karl Marx completed his gymnasium studies in 1835 and then attended the University of Bonn. Having left his parents' home, he rarely returned there and almost never responded to their fond letters containing advice that he ignored. He was busy enjoying Bonn's student culture, and found himself in several minor legal scrapes. He was jailed for drunkenness and for disturbing the peace, and for taking part in a duel. He was also a member of the Tavern Club, which prided itself in being in opposition to the more aristocratic students' clubs.

After almost a year of this behaviour, and with no sign of Karl settling down, Heinrich ordered his son away from Bonn and to attend the University of Berlin instead, where it was hoped that the more serious, studious atmosphere would bring out the best in the young Marx.



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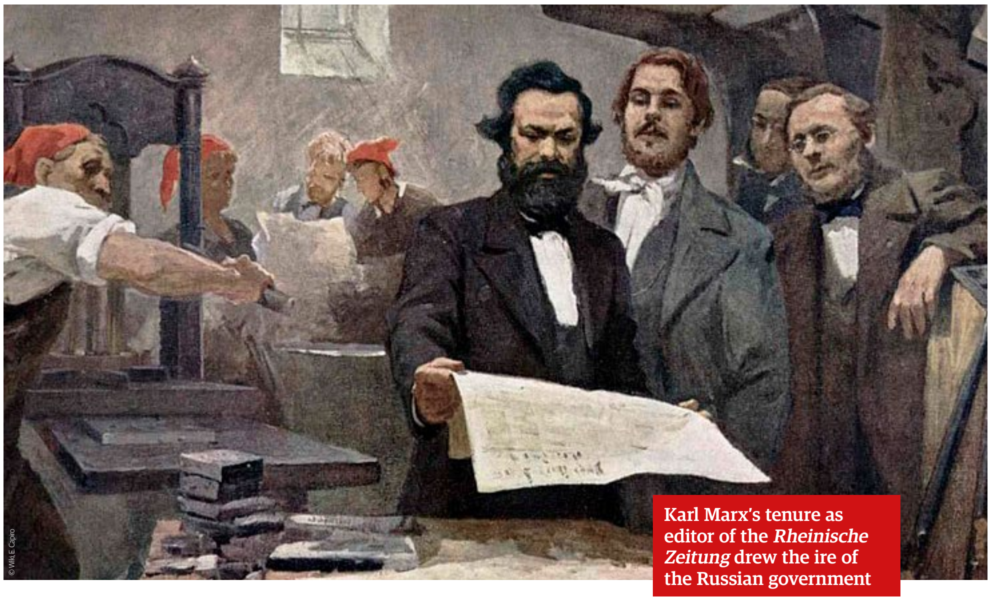


Karl Marx's tenure as editor of the *Rheinische Zeitung* drew the ire of the Russian government

© Wiki E Cigno

Heinrich Marx died on 10 May 1838, an undoubted blow for his son. It could not be said that Karl had devoted himself to his studies in Berlin, and having a mediocre student record, he knew that he couldn't hope to attend any prestigious university for completion of his doctorate. Friends advised that he send his thesis to the lenient University of Jena, where he might hope to pass its rather low bar. This he did, in 1841, having submitted a thesis comparing the views of Democritus and Epicurus.

At this point, Karl Marx hoped for an academic job, but he found that he had fallen in with too radical a group of students at university and he was therefore essentially unemployable. Having few options, he turned to journalism, and in October 1842, he became the editor of the *Rheinische Zeitung*, a left-leaning newspaper in the city of Cologne for which he had been writing for several months.

In 1842, Karl made one of his exceedingly rare appearances in Trier for a six-week period covering his brother Hermann's funeral and his sister Sophie's wedding. Money was very much on his mind and he drove his relationship with his mother so far into the ground that he had to leave her home and spend the remainder of his time in Trier at a guest house. Henriette would later dryly comment, "If only Karl had made capital, instead of just writing about it."

Karl Marx's bad luck still dogged him in Cologne. While his increasingly incendiary articles for the *Rheinische Zeitung* trebled the newspaper's circulation and led it to become a leading Prussian newspaper, they also caused him to come to the attention of the Prussian government once again. Marx was extremely critical of right-wing governments and it was an article he wrote against the Russian autocracy that landed the newspaper in the greatest trouble. The government of Emperor Nicholas I requested that the Prussian government suppress the *Rheinische Zeitung*, and having assigned censors to read through every issue for sedition and counter-governmental material prior to printing, determined that granting Nicholas I his request was the best way forward. Marx could take no more. Official suppression of the newspaper was ordered to begin on 1 April 1843 and Marx resigned on 18 March.

Although he was once again unemployed, Marx was not without prospects. He had agreed to co-edit a series of 'yearbooks' with a Young Hegelian called Wilhelm Ruge, which would necessitate his moving to Paris. But before doing this, after an engagement of seven years duration, Karl Marx married Jenny von Westphalen on 19 June 1843. His difficulties with his mother continued unremedied, and none of the Marx family were in attendance at the wedding.

Jenny von Westphalen was born on February 12, 1814 in Salzwedel, Prussia. She was an intelligent and literary woman, and Marx thought her the most beautiful girl in Trier. She was well-educated and widely read, with a distinct talent for critical writing. She joined Marx in social activism, and in her later years in London, she worked as a theatre critic and wrote articles on the London season.

BRUNO BAUER

Bauer, a German philosopher and theologian, had influence in Marx's early days

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel was a German philosopher who taught at the Friedrich Wilhelm University in Berlin until his death in 1831. He left a large and ambiguous body of work, with plenty of opportunity for students to gather and discuss his philosophy.

Bruno Bauer became associated with the Young Hegelians group. It collectively accepted that the purpose of man, as shown through history, was the destruction of anything that stood in the way of freedom - both personal freedom and freedom of thought. The students wrote papers and articles amounting to radical criticism of man's apparent need for religion, and the state of the Prussian government.

Bauer began teaching at the university in 1838 and became a mentor and close friend of Karl Marx while he was a student there. But as Marx - who had never been totally convinced of Hegel's value - gradually evolved his own views from which grew the Communist philosophy that was promoted by Marx and his friend Engels for the rest of their lives, Bauer rejected Marx's theories, and the two came to such a break that Marx and Engels wrote two books about it: *The Holy Family* (1845) and *The German Ideology* (1846).

> "HIS INCENDIARY ARTICLES FOR THE RHEINISCHE ZEITUNG TREBLED THE NEWSPAPER'S CIRCULATION"

Four months after their June marriage, in October 1843, the young Marxes moved to Paris. Jenny was already pregnant with their first child, a daughter, who was born on 1 May 1844. She was named Jenny Caroline and nicknamed Jennychen.

A few months after Jennychen's birth, Karl Marx arrived at the most momentous day of his life: 28 August 1844, the day on which he met Friedrich Engels at the Café de la Regence in Paris. The pair had corresponded for several years, Marx had published some of Engel's articles and they'd even met once in November 1842 – but it was this second meeting that cemented their lifelong friendship and association.

Marx severed his ties with Wilhelm Ruge and the yearbooks, and on 3 February 1845, he was expelled from France and resettled in Brussels, Belgium, a relatively new country which had become a refuge for political radicals, especially homeless ones like Marx.

Marx and Engels wrote their most famous work, the *Communist Manifesto*, in Brussels and this work caused Marx to be expelled from his third country. His last refuge was London, and although he was never allowed British citizenship, he remained there for the rest of his life.

The Marx family continued to grow. In Brussels, on 26 September 1845, Jennychen was joined by her sister Jenny Laura, simply called Laura. There were five other siblings, but only three daughters would live to adulthood: Jennychen, Laura, and Jenny Julia Eleanor, who was born in London on 16 January 1855. Marx had nicknames for his daughters: Quiqui, Emperor of China, Kakadou and Tussy.

In contrast to the remote, authoritarian Victorian paterfamilias, Karl was an involved and devoted father, much as Heinrich Marx had been. Visitors to the Marx family in the 1850s remembered and commented on how Karl doted on his children, playing with them,

Marx and Engels with Marx's daughters, Jennychen, Eleanor and Laura

© Wiki, Karl Marx und die Frauen

helping them with their studies and reading stories to them.

The German socialist, Wilhelm Liebknecht, was frequently in the Marx house in London in the 1850s and he later wrote: "...In his free minutes, or while strolling, he brought them along, played the wildest and most lively games with them - in short, he was a child among children. On Hampstead Heath we played 'cavalry': I hoisted the one little daughter onto my shoulder, Marx took the other, and we competed in jumping and trotting - and from time to time a little riders' battle was delivered."

When his mother died in 1863, Karl Marx's financial problems were eased. Over the years, she had loaned him large amounts to be debited against his eventual inheritance. Arguments over this debt and other money worries had been a feature of Marx's adult relationship with his remaining parent and had on more than one occasion led to estrangement. But in the end, she had forgiven much of his debt. His inheritance, when he received it, was substantial, and allowed him to afford a bigger house in a good part of London, as well as other luxuries that he lavished on his daughters and their education.

Karl Marx's elder daughters were sent to boarding schools and given an excellent if bourgeoise education. They learnt Italian and French, dancing and sewing, everything necessary for becoming as he intended, women like their mother. But there was also fun; Jennychen and Laura attended balls and had parties of their own at home. And despite their middle-class life, each of them would absorb a great deal of their father's political activism.

In her teenage years, Jennychen became her father's secretary, replacing her mother Jenny in the role. In her last years, the girls' mother was frequently tired, and complained of pain which was eventually diagnosed as liver cancer; she died in London on 2 December 1881.

Marx's birthplace in Trier, the family occupied five rooms in this house

© Wiki, Berthold Werner

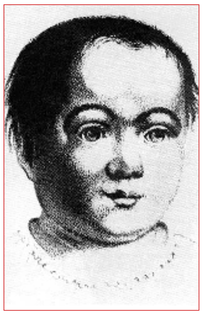
"MARX EDUCATED ELEANOR AT HOME AND SHE HAD A UNIQUE UPBRINGING, STUDYING AND PLAYING IN HER FATHER'S LIBRARY"

Jennychen had a brief career as a political journalist, writing under the name of 'J Williams', focusing on the treatment of Irish political prisoners. She married Charles Longuet, a French journalist and political activist in 1872. The Longuets had five children, one of whom, Jean Laurent Frederic, grew up to be a leader in the Socialist Party of France. Jennychen died of suspected bladder cancer at the age of 38 in 1882.

Laura married Paul Lafargue in 1868. He was a French socialist who worked for the First International, and a frequent visitor to the Marx household. They had three children in the first three years of their marriage, but all three died

CHARLES LOUIS HENRI EDGAR MARX ('MUSCH')

Marx's only son to live past babyhood, Musch's death at eight devastated his father



Edgar Marx – known in his family as Musch, 'the Fly' – was born on 3 February 1847 during the time when his father and Friedrich Engels were writing the *Communist Manifesto*. Eight years later, he died on 6 April 1855. His death was not sudden. He had been ill for about a month, suffering from a fever and complaining of stomach pains. Modern medical knowledge suggests that he had a ruptured appendix – easily cured today – but some sort of abdominal tuberculosis could also have been the cause.

Musch's death was the worst thing that ever happened to his father. As his family grieved, Karl Marx turned to his writing desk and wrote, "It is indescribable how much we miss the child, everywhere we turn… Now I know for the first time what genuine misfortune is. I feel broken down…"

To Engels, Marx confided he "…thought of you and your friendship and the hope that we together can still do something sensible in the world." Months later, Marx's daughter Eleanor was born, but even this joy was clouded due to the loss of young Edgar.

in infancy. The Lafargues devoted their lives to translating Marx's works into French and in spreading the word of Marxism in France.

Laura and Paul Lafargue committed suicide together in 1911, believing that they had outlived their usefulness to the cause. The last words in Laura's suicide note were, "Long live Communism! Long live the Second International!" Vladimir Lenin spoke at their joint funeral at Pere Lachaise Cemetery in Paris.

Karl Marx's daughter, Eleanor, was a decade younger than her sisters. Karl educated her at home and she had a unique upbringing, studying and playing in her father's library while he wrote *Das Kapital*. He took breaks from writing to tell her a story starring an antihero called Hans Rockle. The political allegory of Rockle is inseparable from the work Karl was doing in *Das Kapital*, and because the story was interwoven with *Das Kapital*, Eleanor grew up with a unique understanding of political economics.

At the age of 16, Eleanor fell in love with Prosper-Olivier Lissagaray, a journalist 34 years her senior. Marx was against the relationship, but Eleanor pursued it for another nine years. During this time, she explored her limits as a woman with a career and could often be found smoking and reading newspapers in coffee shops around her neighbourhood.

From 1884 until 1897, Eleanor was involved with the socialist and Darwinian Edward Aveling. Together they worked on a translation of *Das Kapital*, and following Engels' death in 1895 (Eleanor and Laura shared a decent portion of Engels' estate) began the work of collating the Marx-Engels papers.

In 1897, Aveling secretly married an actress. When Eleanor discovered this betrayal, she became despondent and on 31 March 1898, she committed suicide. Fortunately, her father had not lived to see this happen to his youngest daughter.

On 14 March 1883, Karl Marx had died in London of pleurisy and bronchitis. Friedrich Engels, Laura and Eleanor and Karl Marx's two sons-in-law were present at his deathbed. In his eulogy at Highgate Cemetery, in the plot reserved for atheists, Engels read out, "…at a quarter to three in the afternoon, the greatest living thinker ceased to think. He had been left alone for scarcely two minutes, and when we came back we found him in his armchair, peacefully gone to sleep – but forever."

The tomb bears the carved message: "The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways – the point however is to change it," and the last line of the *Communist Manifesto*: "Workers of All Lands Unite."

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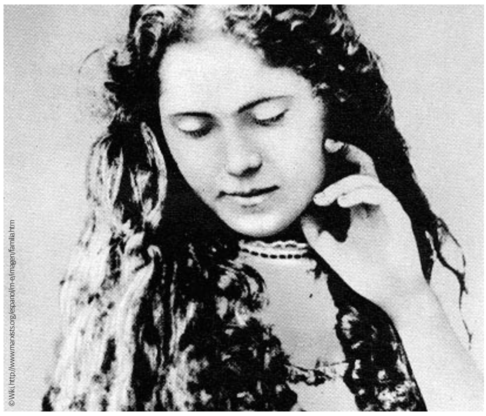

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Eleanor Marx and Wilhelm Liebknecht in 1886

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FRIEDRICH ENGELS
THE UNLIKELY REVOLUTIONARY

Karl Marx's comrade-in-arms and patron
of the socialist struggle

WRITTEN BY MATT ROBINSON

The story of Friedrich Engels' life is one of contradiction and compromise, overshadowed by the towering figure of his comrade-in-arms, Karl Marx. Yet, when the men who would become the two most celebrated minds of the communist movement first met, in November 1842, the introduction would leave each somewhat unimpressed with the other. Travelling to tend to family business near Manchester, England, Friedrich Engels stopped in Cologne, at the offices of the *Rheinische Zeitung* newspaper, first encountering the rabble-rousing star writer, Marx. Engels' growing concern with the political issues of the day had led him to contribute a series of articles critical of the course of the Prussian state to the newspaper. But the chance opportunity to meet the famously erudite journalist, Marx, would prove a rather unceremonious start to the relationship that would do much to define Engels' legacy. It would be another two years before the pair met again - at the famous Café de la Régence in Paris - by which time the eldest son of a Prussian industrialist had undergone a profound transformation.

The 21-year-old Engels' voyage to England had been on his father's orders, to protect the family investment in a cotton manufacturing firm in Salford - with the added paternal hope that exposing his son to the realities of business would rid him of his increasingly radical leanings. Canal transportation and cheap coal, along with the soft water in the region and climate - ideal for treating cotton - had turned Salford into a boom town for industrial manufacturing in the 1800s. But the dilapidation, unsanitary conditions, gruelling labour, and long hours expected of workers proved hard for Engels to ignore. Incensed, he began writing extensively on the subject. Unbridled capitalism and the grim side-effects of the Industrial Revolution on the working class would subsequently become dominant themes in his work. It was at the same time that he would meet the woman who would become his long-term companion - and guide through the harsh world inhabited by the city's working class - Mary Burns. Little is known about Burns, and no photos have survived, but her influence on Engels would help transform him from an idealistic youth to a man with purpose, graduating from the realm of philosophy and literature to that of direct action.

When Engels finally met Karl Marx again in 1844, he had finished his first book, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, a work that would have a momentous impact on his fellow firebrand. Marx would adopt Engels' idea that the oppressed working class would lead the revolution against the bourgeoisie as society advanced toward socialism, and incorporate this as part of his own philosophy. Inspired by Engels' commentary on the subject: "A class which bears all the disadvantages of the social order without enjoying its advantages … Who can demand that such a class respect this social order?"

The two began an intellectual partnership that would last nearly four decades, co-authoring the *Communist Manifesto* and many other works. While Marx devoted himself to organising working class revolutionary action, he lived largely financially supported by Engels, who continued to derive much of his income from his family's business. That one of the most influential socialist thinkers would live such an unusual double life is certainly the most extraordinary aspect of Engels' story. As a cotton lord by day and political agitator for the rights of the working class by night, Engels would profit from the exploitation of the very people he sought to liberate from their struggles, with the intention of utilising this profit for the greater good. Far from unaware of this contradiction, he would proclaim: "One can, at the same time, be a very good investor and a socialist … If I were certain that I could make a million on the stock exchange tomorrow and put the means at the party's disposal in Europe and America, I would invest immediately!"

Outliving Marx by 12 years, Engels assumed the role as executor of his literary estate, leading some commentators to accuse him of exploiting his position to substitute his own views for those of his more widely celebrated associate. While the differences in thought between the two men who have come to define the communist movement have reached somewhat of a mythic status, what is clear is that without Engels the development of Marx's ideas would have been lacking and the success of his work far from certain. More so, the socialist movement would have been deprived of one of its most unlikely advocates and important intellectual voices.

Bronze statues of Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx in Berlin, Germany

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THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO

A key pillar of communist and socialist parties in the 19th century, the Communist Manifesto inspired revolutionaries across the globe

WRITTEN BY BEE GINGER

The *Communist Manifesto* was a political pamphlet published in London by the Communist League (a group of German-born revolutionary socialists) in February 1848. Given its vaunting ambitions, it opened in a fittingly dramatic way. "A spectre is haunting Europe – the spectre of communism."

The *Manifesto* was a joint development of ideas between Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, but the final draft was written by Marx alone in January 1848 in Brussels. He followed a template that Engels had previously written for the League of the Just (which Marx and Engels were asked to join and which they renamed The Communist League). Its text became a significant influence politically on the German public and led to Marx being banished from the country.

Although many of the ideas in the *Communist Manifesto* were not new, the work was sent to London and adopted by the League as the group's manifesto. It argued that the exploitation of one class by another is the motivating force behind every development in history. In the publication Marx predicted an imminent revolution in Europe, and soon after its release revolution indeed broke out in France over the banning of political meetings that were being held by opposition and socialist groups. King Louis Philippe I was forced to abdicate following isolated riots leading to popular revolt, and it wasn't long before the revolution spread across Europe like wildfire. Marx, who was in Paris at the time, was banished by the Belgian government, which was fearful that Belgium, too, would soon be engulfed.

Despite the original publication in German having little immediate impact, its ideas reverberated into the next century, and by the 1950s almost half of the world's population lived under Marxist rulership. The *Manifesto* would serve as a political rallying cry for the communist movement throughout Europe.

Written in four parts, the document begins by pointing out that the European bourgeoisie had identified communism as a threat with the potential to change both the economic system and power structure known as capitalism.

Part one of the document explained the evolution of capitalism and the class structure that it created; a new class system comprised of wage workers (the proletariat) and the owners of means of production (the bourgeoisie).

Marx and Engels highlighted that world views and the interests of the powerful and wealthy minority are reflected by the state, and not the views of the proletariat, who make up the majority of society. They went on to discuss the exploitative reality faced by workers forced to compete for work and sell their labour to the bourgeoisie. In their view, workers soon become expendable as they are easily replaced. However, the *Manifesto*'s authors realised the flaw in this approach. "What the bourgeoisie therefore produces, above all, are its own gravediggers. Its [the system's] fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable."

The communist movement sought to represent the interests of the proletariat as a whole and aimed to unify workers into a class with the same interests, and redistribute political power by overturning the rule of the bourgeoisie. Marx and Engels set out ten goals they hoped to implement, including the abolition of private property, the introduction of free education for all children in public schools, and equal liability of all to work.

Part three focused on a vision of what could be, with an end goal of creating separate new societies rather than reforming existing ones, a dream that would be achieved through a collective struggle by the proletariat.

The fourth and final part expressed its support for all revolutionary movements that challenged the existing political and social orders of the time. Summoning the working class to stand as one, Marx closed with a call to arms. "The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Workers of the world unite!"

Since the late 19th century, the *Communist Manifesto* (which has been revised and republished numerous times) has been read widely around the world and remains the foundation for critics of capitalism. It has proven to be the inspiration for many economic, social and political systems that are now organised by democracy and equality rather than the exploitation of the masses.

COMMUNIST MANIFESTO

- **Eliminate private land ownership and rent as applied to public property.**
- **Institute a heavy progressive or graduated income tax.**
- **Abolish the right of inheritance.**
- **Confiscate all properties owned by emigrants and rebels.**
- **Establish a national bank where all money and loans are owned by the federal government and constitute a monopoly.**
- **Nationally centralise the control of communication and transportation by the federal government.**
- **Place ownership of factories and "instruments of production" in the hands of the federal government, cultivate the wastelands, improve the soil thereof according to a formed plan.**
- **Everyone will be liable to work and labour. Industrial and agricultural armies will be formed, especially in agriculture.**
- **Combine agriculture and manufacturing, eliminate the sovereignty of town/state and federal government by distributing the population more evenly over the face of the country.**
- **Free public education for all children, the elimination of children performing factory work, and combine education and manufacturing.**

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LENIN: THE UNCOMPROMISING REVOLUTIONARY

From modest beginnings, Lenin would change the course of the 20th Century

WRITTEN BY GREG KING

Vladimir Ilych Lenin's looks fit a certain caricature of a revolutionary. Steely eyes bespoke an iron will and an obsession with cold, pragmatic reason. Yet there was little in his early life to suggest a man who would change the world. He was born in 1870 as Vladimir Ulyanov, son of an affluent, educated couple in the town of Simbersk (now Ulyanovsk), Russia, where his father served as inspector of schools. As a child, Vladimir read voraciously and was usually at the head of his school classes. But when Vladimir was 15, his father died unexpectedly; a year later, his older brother Alexander was arrested and executed when he plotted the assassination of Tsar Alexander III.

These two events left Vladimir embittered. He renounced the family's Orthodox faith and threw himself into his studies, graduating from secondary school at the top of his class and moving to Kazan to study law at the university. Here he met others questioning the political order and after participating in several illegal student demonstrations, Vladimir was arrested, expelled, and left without a rudder. With his days free, he began to read any revolutionary works he could find: Nikolai Chernyshevsky's 1863 novel *What is to be Done?* proved to be especially influential in directing Vladimir to study the works of Karl Marx and communist philosophy. Vladimir became a true believer, convinced that workers would one day overthrow the existing capitalist Tsarist order.

Imperial authorities proved surprisingly indulgent and in 1890 Vladimir took a law examination and received his license. For a time he worked as a clerk in Samara by day while continuing to study revolutionary tracts by night. In 1893 he was allowed to move to St Petersburg, where he continued the familiar pattern of legal work and secret meetings to discuss Marxist theory. With fellow Marxist Julius Martov he formed the Union of Struggle

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for the Emancipation of the Working Class, which demanded reduced work hours and safer conditions for those who laboured in factories. During a strike in 1896 he was arrested and charged with sedition for distributing his literature. The following February he was sentenced to a three-year political exile in the Siberian village of Shushenskoye. Political exiles enjoyed a degree of freedom: Vladimir had his own house, visited his neighbours, and went duck hunting. Here, in 1898, he married fellow would-be revolutionary Nadezhda Krupskaya: the couple spent their honeymoon, such as it was, translating Sidney and Beatrice Webb's *The Theory and Practice of Trade Unionism* into the Russian language.

In 1900, freed from exile, Vladimir took up residence in Switzerland, founding *Iskra* ("Spark"), a Marxist newspaper and publishing his own revolutionary treatise, *What is to be Done?* in 1902 under the pseudonym of Lenin, the name he would use for the rest of his life. In it, Lenin advocated for a revolution led by trained revolutionaries rather than workers. "Socialist consciousness cannot exist among the workers," he insisted. "This can be introduced only from without." This view was anathema to most members of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party, which attempted to coordinate revolutionary efforts and thought in exile. Instead, they envisioned a future uprising from below. This conflict came to a head in 1903, at the Second Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party in London. Lenin insisted that party leadership should be restricted to professionals who could lead the masses in revolt. "Give us an organisation of revolutionaries," Lenin said, "and we will overturn Russia."

In this struggle, Lenin faced off against his friend and fellow revolutionary Julius Martov, who advocated for a larger party membership. Lenin forced a number of votes on the outstanding questions and split the party. He won most of them, emerging as head of a new faction, the Bolsheviks (after the Russian word for "majority") while the losers came to be called Mensheviks, after their minority status. After this, Lenin did all he could to undermine the Mensheviks, attacking them in print as he consolidated his power and influence.

Lenin remained in self-imposed European exile: when revolution erupted in Russia in 1905, he urged bloody and violent insurrections to topple Tsar Nicholas II. In January 1905, Tsarist soldiers shot and killed hundreds of unarmed workers as they were marching on the Winter Palace, in an event that became known as "Bloody Sunday." "The revolutionary education of the proletariat made more progress in one day," Lenin would write, "than it could have made in months and years of drab, humdrum, wretched existence." He urged decisive action: "It requires furious energy and more energy," Lenin wrote in the midst of the uprising and strikes. "I am appalled, truly appalled, to see that more than half a year has been spent in talk about bombs - and not a single bomb has yet been made... Go to the youth. Organise at once and everywhere fighting brigades among students and particularly among workers. Let them arm themselves immediately with whatever weapons they can obtain: a knife, a revolver, a kerosene-soaked rag for setting fires."

But the Revolution was eventually - and ruthlessly - suppressed; although Nicholas II was forced to give Russia its first elected parliament, the Duma, the Tsar still retained enormous power and Lenin's hopes faded with the passing years. He occasionally secretly returned to St Petersburg, cultivating relationships with conspirators like Joseph Stalin and urging violence as a means to fund the movement and create widespread unrest. With the passing years Lenin increasingly insisted on subservience to his ideas, causing conflicts at party meetings in Paris and Copenhagen.

In 1912 Lenin attended a Russian Social Democratic Labour Party conference in Prague. The nearly decade long fight between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks was front and centre on the agenda. Again Lenin argued for a strong, centralised power that could lead the people of Russia to revolution rather than waiting for the bourgeoisie to rise up. For Lenin, with his innate distrust of nearly everyone, the middle classes couldn't be counted on to provide a revolution. It was the workers - but only workers dominated by strong, powerful leadership - who would one day overthrow the autocracy in Russia. Knowing that Lenin would push the issue, most of his major rivals in the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party - George Plekhanov, Julius Martov, and Leon Trotsky - simply remained away from the conference. When attendees protested that no action could be taken without full party representation, Lenin simply waved aside all concerns, saying that the meeting "constituted itself a supreme and legitimate assembly of the

THE DEATH OF LENIN'S BROTHER

In 1887 Lenin's older brother Alexander was executed as a terrorist

Perhaps the most pivotal event in the life of the man who would become Vladimir Lenin took place in 1887. His older brother Alexander Ulyanov was attending the University of St Petersburg, where he fell in with members of Narodnaya Volya ("The Party of the People's Will"), a terrorist organisation that just five years earlier had assassinated Tsar Alexander II. The group planned to kill his son and successor Alexander III in March 1887 with makeshift bombs. Police uncovered the plot before it took place and Alexander was among those arrested. Alexander freely admitted his guilt: "Terror," he declared, "is our answer to the violence of the state. It is the only way to force a despotic regime to grant political freedom to the people." His mother implored the Tsar to pardon her son and to let her see him. Alexander III refused the pardon but granted the meeting, writing, "I think it would be advisable to allow her to visit her son, so that she might see for herself the kind of person this precious son has become." On 8 May 1887 (OS)/20 May 1887 (NS) 21-year-old Alexander Ulyanov was executed by hanging. The events would set Vladimir on a path towards vengeance and revolution.

"HE ARGUED FOR A CENTRALISED POWER THAT COULD LEAD RUSSIA TO REVOLUTION"

entire Russian Social Democratic Labour Party." As such, his motions were quickly approved without opposition and he assumed near total control of the party.

Lenin might have a grip on the party, but he drifted through these years as a dispossessed exile, suspicious of possible spies. Then came 1914, and outbreak of the First World War. Lenin quickly perceived this as a struggle between workers and capitalists that could be exploited to revolutionary ends. "The war is being waged for the division of colonies and the robbery of foreign territory," he wrote. "Thieves have fallen out, and to refer to the defeats at a given moment of one of the thieves in order to identify the interests of all thieves with the interests of the nation or the fatherland is an unconscionable bourgeois lie."

Lenin was dismayed that German socialists supported the Kaiser's war efforts, and regarded them as traitors to the revolutionary cause. He wrote several tracts imploring his comrades to action: *The Tasks of Revolutionary Social Democracy in the European War*, and *The War and Russian Social Democracy.* He argued: "The European and world war has the clearly defined character of a bourgeois, imperialist and dynastic war. A struggle for markets and for freedom to loot foreign countries, a striving to suppress the revolutionary movement of the proletariat and democracy in the individual countries, a desire to deceive, disunite, and slaughter the proletarians of all countries by setting the wage slaves of one nation against those of another so as to benefit the bourgeoisie - these are the only real content and significance of the war."

Still, living in neutral Switzerland, there was little he could do to impact events except watch from a distance. As 1915 rolled into 1916 and then 1917, Lenin became increasingly depressed, overcome with a kind of fatalistic conviction that he would die before getting to see the revolution he so desired.

Lenin addresses servicemen in Red Square, Moscow in May 1919

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Lenin (centre) with members of the League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class in 1897

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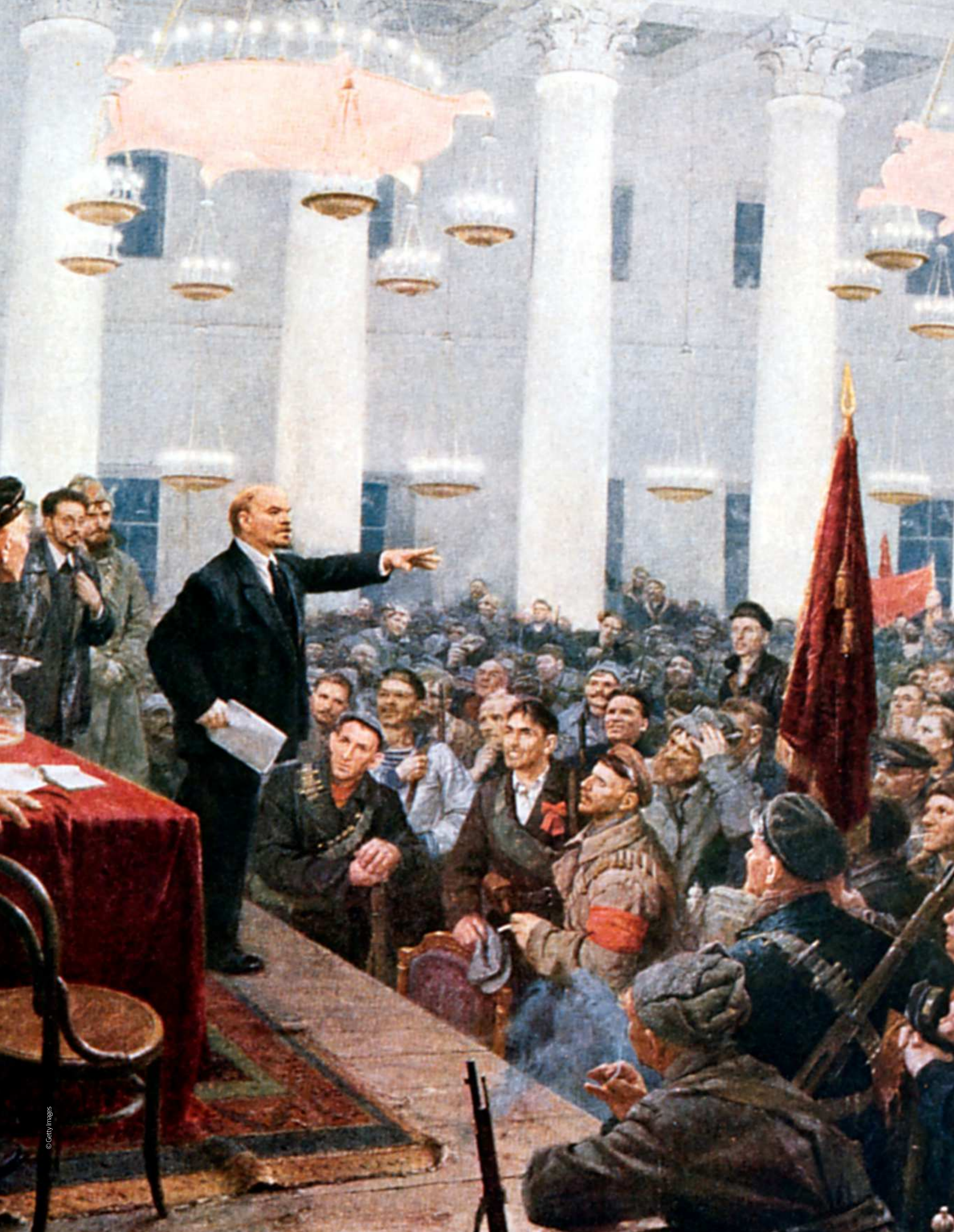

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REVOLUTION IN RUSSIA

Two revolutions in Russia changed 20th-century history

WRITTEN BY GREG KING

By February 1917, imperial Russia had been at war for 30 months. Millions of Russian soldiers had been killed or captured, and military defeats left the country demoralised. The government was in the hands of an indecisive Tsar Nicholas II, who had for two decades ignored urgent calls for reform.

Even more unpopular than the Tsar was his reportedly domineering wife, the German-born Empress Alexandra. Not only did many suspect that she was a traitor to her adopted homeland but she had also helped bring disrepute on the throne through her disastrous relationship with the notorious Siberian peasant Gregory Rasputin. With Nicholas II so often away from the capital to supervise his army, it was Alexandra - and behind her the despised Rasputin - who advised constant ministerial changes and policy reversals that left the country adrift.

Food and fuel shortages, rising prices, war weariness, and general discontent dominated thoughts that harsh winter. On 18 February (OS) / 2 March (NS), workers of the Putilov Factory, the largest industrial plant in the Imperial capital of Petrograd (renamed from the Germanic St Petersburg at the beginning of the war), went on strike. Five days later, more strikers joined them in the streets, demanding food, an end to the war and, most ominously, the fall of the autocracy. Within 24 hours the mob had swelled to some 200,000 protesters, leaving the capital paralysed. Demonstrators marched through the streets as calls for an end to the monarchy joined demands for bread and peace.

Nicholas II was 800 miles away at army quarters when the revolution took form. On 25 February / 8 March, he ordered General Khabalov, Military Commander of Petrograd, “to stop the disorders in the capital, which are unacceptable in the difficult time of war.”

The Tsar also ordered that the Duma, Russia’s elected parliament, be prorogued. Faced with this

“CABLE AFTER CABLE IMPLORED NICHOLAS TO MAKE CONCESSIONS; WHEN HE FINALLY OFFERED A PROPOSAL IT WAS TOO LATE”

illegal order and with the capital in revolt, the politicians ignored the Tsar's demands.

26 February / 11 March saw Petrograd in chaos. Shops were looted and buildings set aflame. Khabalov sent his troops into the streets; they opened fire, killing 169 and injuring over a thousand people as the snow ran red with blood. Police and Cossacks began going over to the side of the revolutionaries. The mob raided the Petrograd Arsenal, burnt shops, freed prisoners and began tearing down portraits of the Tsar and emblems of the Romanov dynasty. Michael Rodzianko, President of the Duma, cabled the Tsar: “Save Russia. She is threatened with humiliation and disgrace. Your Majesty, urgently summon a person in whom the whole country can have faith and entrust him with the formation of a government that all the people can trust. Having been re-inspired by faith in themselves and their leaders, all of Russia will heed such a government. In this terrible hour, unprecedented in its ghastly consequences, there is no other way out and to delay is impossible.”

“That fat Rodzianko has sent me more nonsense to which I won't even reply,” was the Tsar's response to that.

Another, increasingly desperate cable from Rodzianko arrived the following day: “The situation is growing worse. Measures should be taken immediately as tomorrow will be too late. The last hour has struck, when the fate of the country and dynasty is being decided. The government is powerless to stop the disorders.”

Sickened by having shot so many demonstrators the previous day, Khabalov's troops deserted; soldiers in the elite Imperial Guards Regiments - the cream of the empire's military - began going over to the revolution. Rebel hands now held 40,000 rifles; police joined demonstrators in the street, idly watching as the looting continued.

A mob in the streets of Petrograd in February 1917, burning symbols of the monarchy

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Faced with an intransigent ruler, the Duma declared itself the Provisional Government. Learning of this, Nicholas II left army headquarters to return to the capital; when revolutionaries blocked his train, he was forced to the town of Pskov. Cable after cable from the capital implored Nicholas to make concessions; when he finally offered a half-hearted reform proposal it was too late. "It is obvious that Your Majesty has not taken what is happening here into account," Rodzianko informed the Tsar. "With pain in my heart, I have to report that hatred of the dynasty has reached its limit. All quarters demand the Tsar's abdication in the name of his son, under the regency of Grand Duke Michael."

On 2/15 March, under pressure from his commanding officers, Nicholas II abdicated the throne for himself and his son and heir, Alexei. The following day Nicholas's brother, Grand Duke Michael, refused the crown: the 304-year old Romanov dynasty had come to an end.

The new Provisional Government was forced into an uneasy alliance with the Petrograd Soviet to restore order and maintain control. From his exile in Switzerland, Lenin longed to return to Russia. A deal was worked out with imperial Germany to allow Lenin and a group of fellow revolutionaries to travel unmolested across the country in a sealed train "like a plague bacillus," as Winston Churchill later wrote.

Lenin arrived at Petrograd's Finland Station on the night of 3/16 April, to be greeted by a riotous crowd waving red flags and banners with revolutionary slogans. From atop an armoured car, Lenin expounded what became known as his April Theses: the Provisional Government was a bourgeois institution dedicated to continuing the capitalist war with the help of the Mensheviks and Social Democrats in the Petrograd Soviet. Only by overthrowing the existing government could the proletariat achieve victory. The war must end and a newly composed Soviet should seize the reins of power.

Lenin was working quietly behind the scenes to build up his power and influence. In July, he urged Bolsheviks to rise up against the Provisional Government, which insisted on continuing the war against Germany and Austria-Hungary, despite public opinion demanding an immediate peace. Half a million soldiers and workers filled the streets in protest but the Provisional Government managed to put down the would-be revolt and Lenin, threatened with arrest, was forced to flee to Finland, where he would spend the next few months hiding out from authorities.

In the wake of the so-called "July Days," Alexander Kerensky, who had been Minister of Justice in the Provisional Government, became Prime Minister. Within a few weeks he faced an unexpected crisis when General Lavr Kornilov, Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Army, sent troops to Petrograd. Kerensky, believing that Kornilov was planning a military coup against him, turned to the Bolsheviks for help, allowing them to openly organise brigades and arming them with machine guns and portable batteries. The coup failed, but Kerensky's actions left his Bolshevik opponents dangerously united and dangerously armed. In September they insisted that all of their jailed comrades be freed, and Trotsky - now firmly on Lenin's side - assumed control of the Petrograd Soviet.

Free from the threat of arrest, Lenin returned to Petrograd and began arguing for an armed overthrow of the Provisional Government. This time he faced little resistance. On the evening of 10/23 October, he held a secret meeting of the Military Revolutionary Committee to organise a coup. Plans called for the Soviet to seize control of the capitals' tram and train lines, telephone and telegraph exchanges, newspapers and banks. "An armed uprising," Lenin declared, "is inevitable, and the time for it is fully ripe."

Ironically, despite the planning, the revolution happened almost by accident. Early on the morning of 24 October/6 November, armed soldiers loyal to the Provisional Government stormed the printing house of Bolshevik newspaper *Rabochiy Put* ("Worker's Path"), destroyed the equipment, and burned all copies of the paper.

At the same time, Alexander Kerensky announced that he had outlawed all Bolshevik propaganda and that his government intended to prosecute those who disseminated it. Just a few hours later, an armed contingent of Bolsheviks successfully stormed the newspaper offices and turned out Kerensky's soldiers. Such clashes between Provisional Government and the Bolsheviks had become common, but Kerensky sensed that this situation was somehow different. That afternoon, he ordered that all but one of the city's bridges be raised and guarded in an effort to prevent his opponents from crossing the capital, spread across numerous islands.

Lenin met with members of the Military Revolutionary Committee and urged action. "The situation," he told his fellow revolutionaries, "is utterly critical. It is clearer than clear that now, already, putting off the insurrection is equivalent to its death. With all my strength I wish to convince my comrades that now everything

KERENSKY

The February Revolution brought Alexander Kerensky to power; the October Revolution forced him into exile

Alexander Kerensky was the pivotal figure in Russia's short-lived Provisional Government. Ironically, he had been born in Simbirsk - the same town where Lenin had grown up; Kerensky's father had even taught the young Lenin at school. After taking a law degree, Alexander Kerensky had drifted into politics, becoming an elected member of the Duma in 1912 as a moderate socialist. After the February Revolution, the Provisional Government had named him first Minister of Justice and then War. In the summer of 1917, following the failed Bolshevik uprising in Petrograd, Kerensky became Prime Minister. He had an uneasy relationship with the Bolsheviks but his pledge to continue the war made him deeply unpopular. After the fall of the Provisional Government, Kerensky left the country, settling in the United States where he wrote and lectured until his death in 1970.

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The cruiser Aurora, which fired on the Winter Palace during the October Revolution

is hanging by a hair, that on the agenda now are questions that are decided not by conferences, not by congresses, but exclusively by populations, by the mass, by the struggle of armed masses....History will not forgive revolutionaries for delay, when they can win today, but risk losing a great deal tomorrow, risk losing everything."

That evening, as twilight was falling over the capital, armed groups of Bolsheviks clashed with Kerensky's soldiers, retaking several of the bridges and seizing control of the Central Telegraph Exchange. A number of Bolshevik-commandeered, armed vessels, including the cruiser Aurora, arrived that night from the nearby naval base at Kronstadt and dropped anchor along the capital's broad Neva River facing the Winter Palace, where members of the Provisional Government had taken refuge.

As control of the city slipped from his fingers, Kerensky borrowed a car from the American Embassy and drove out of Petrograd, ostensibly to locate additional troops to defend the government. He would never return.

Dawn broke late on 25 October / 7 November. Petrograd seemed ominously quiet, its streets largely deserted. Throughout the day the Bolsheviks continued to seize state institutions and rounded up fleeing members of the Provisional Government. Now all that remained were terrified members of Kerensky's Cabinet. A little after six that evening, the group of artillery cadets guarding them in the Winter Palace abandoned their posts, taking their arms with them; two hours later, some 200 Cossacks also deserted. Only 140 members of the Women's Battalion, along with a few stray cadets, stood between the cabinet and the Bolsheviks.

At 9:45 that night, the cruiser Aurora fired a blank shell at the palace, warning that the next one would be live. Occasional gunfire echoed in the night as Bolsheviks ringed the palace. Shortly after midnight, Lenin's comrades stormed the Winter Palace; there was no armed resistance in place as they filtered through the lavish rooms, located the terrified cabinet members, arrested them, and dragged them off to a notoriously grim prison in the city's Fortress of St Peter and St Paul. The Provisional Government, which had been ruling Russia for the past seven months, was to be no more.

"LENIN WASTED NO TIME. TELEGRAMS ACROSS RUSSIA BROUGHT WORD OF THE SOVIET VICTORY"

THE RED ARMY

Leon Trotsky created the Red Army to save the revolution

As Lenin's new regime entered uncertain times and faced constant military threats from gathered anti-Bolshevik forces, Leon Trotsky was charged with forming a new, Red Army. The Bolshevik forces were poorly trained and poorly led; on 13 / 26 March 1918 Trotsky was appointed People's Commissar for Army and Navy Affairs and chairman of the Supreme Military Council. Trotsky's immediate task was imposing discipline and direction; to do so he often relied on former Tsarist officers, whose loyalty proved pliable, and on forced conscription to swell the ranks.

"The army," Trotsky said, "had to be built on a soil of impoverishment and exhaustion, under circumstances when hatred of war and things military seized millions upon millions of workers and peasants."

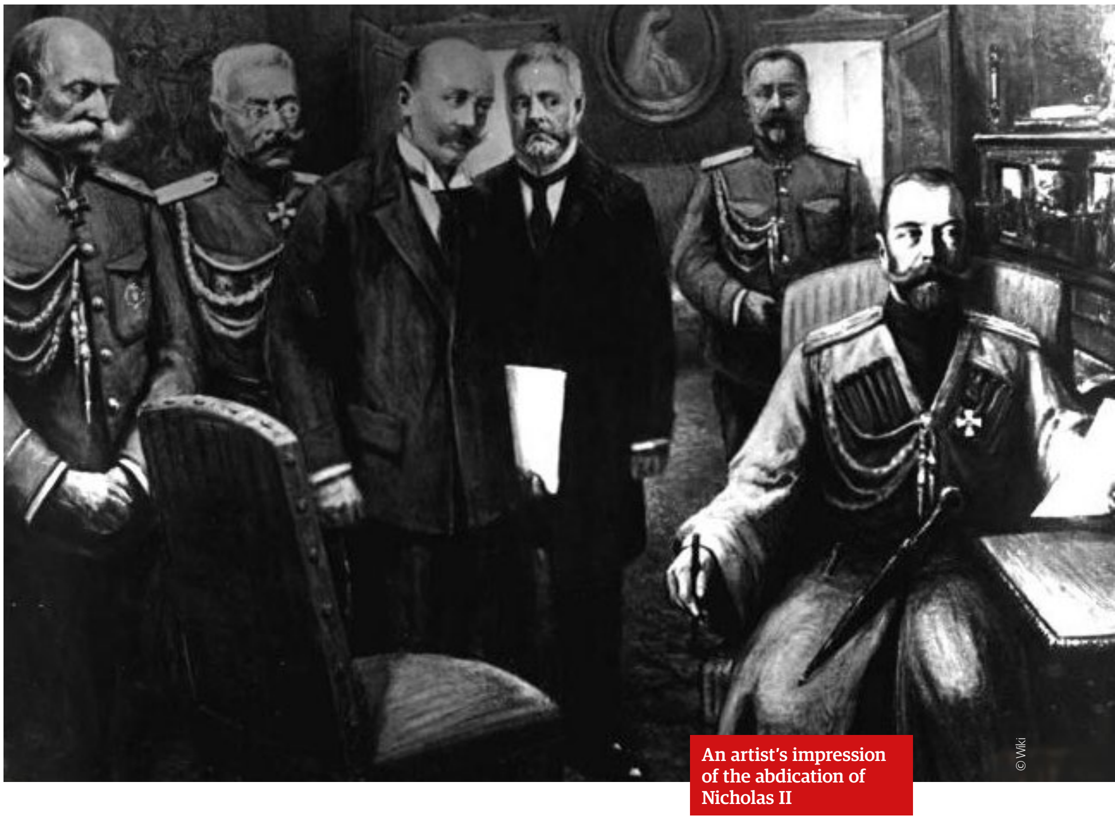
The situation became desperate in the summer of 1918, when anti-Bolshevik forces coalesced into the White Army and began capturing towns and territories across Russia. But by autumn of that year, and under Trotsky's resolute, often ruthless leadership, the new Red Army had grown from some 300,000 men to encompass more than a million soldiers. In September, a new commander, Ioakim Vatsetis, took over as nominal head of the army, but Trotsky remained in general charge as head of the new Revolutionary Military Council. Over the next two years, the Red Army would gradually gain in confidence as it successfully battled the White Army in Russia's Civil War. Although Stalin later tried to erase much of Trotsky's career from Soviet history, his creation of the Red Army had undoubtedly saved Lenin's regime.

Lenin wasted no time. Telegrams across Russia brought word of the Soviet victory. Although later Soviet mythology presented the October Revolution as a great, popular uprising undertaken by the masses, it had in truth taken place without most of Petrograd knowing what was underway: people awoke on the morning of 26 October / 27 November surprised to learn that the Provisional Government had fallen and a new one had taken its place.

Lenin and his comrades established the Soviet Council of People's Commissars as the country's new ruling body. Lenin was named Chairman. All banks were nationalised; ownership of private property was abolished; and control of factories was handed over to workers' committees.

Anticipating defiance, Lenin established the All-Russian Extraordinary Committee for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage, the dreaded Cheka, and named the ruthless Felix Dzerzhinsky as its head, with instructions to stamp out any resistance. "We have no need of justice now," Dzerzhinsky ominously warned. "Now we need a battle to the death."

After decades of thwarted hopes, Lenin had finally achieved his dream of a revolution.



An artist's impression of the abdication of Nicholas II

© Wiki

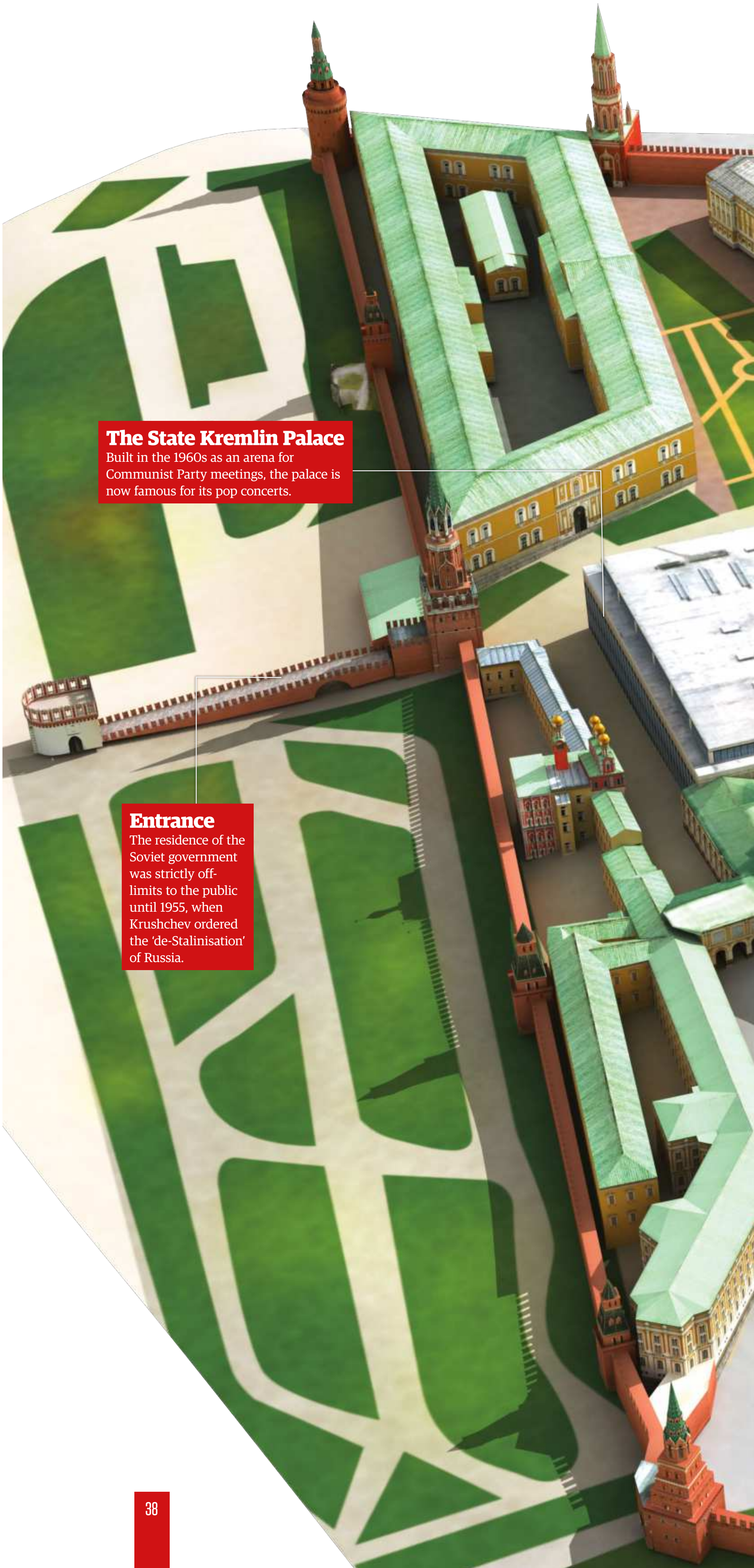
THE KREMLIN

Heart of Moscow, the queen of the Russian Land, 1482-present, Russia

For decades, what went on behind the imposing walls of the Kremlin was a mystery to the outside world. Previously the Moscow residence of Russian tsars, after the October Revolution of 1917 it became the new headquarters of the Soviet government.

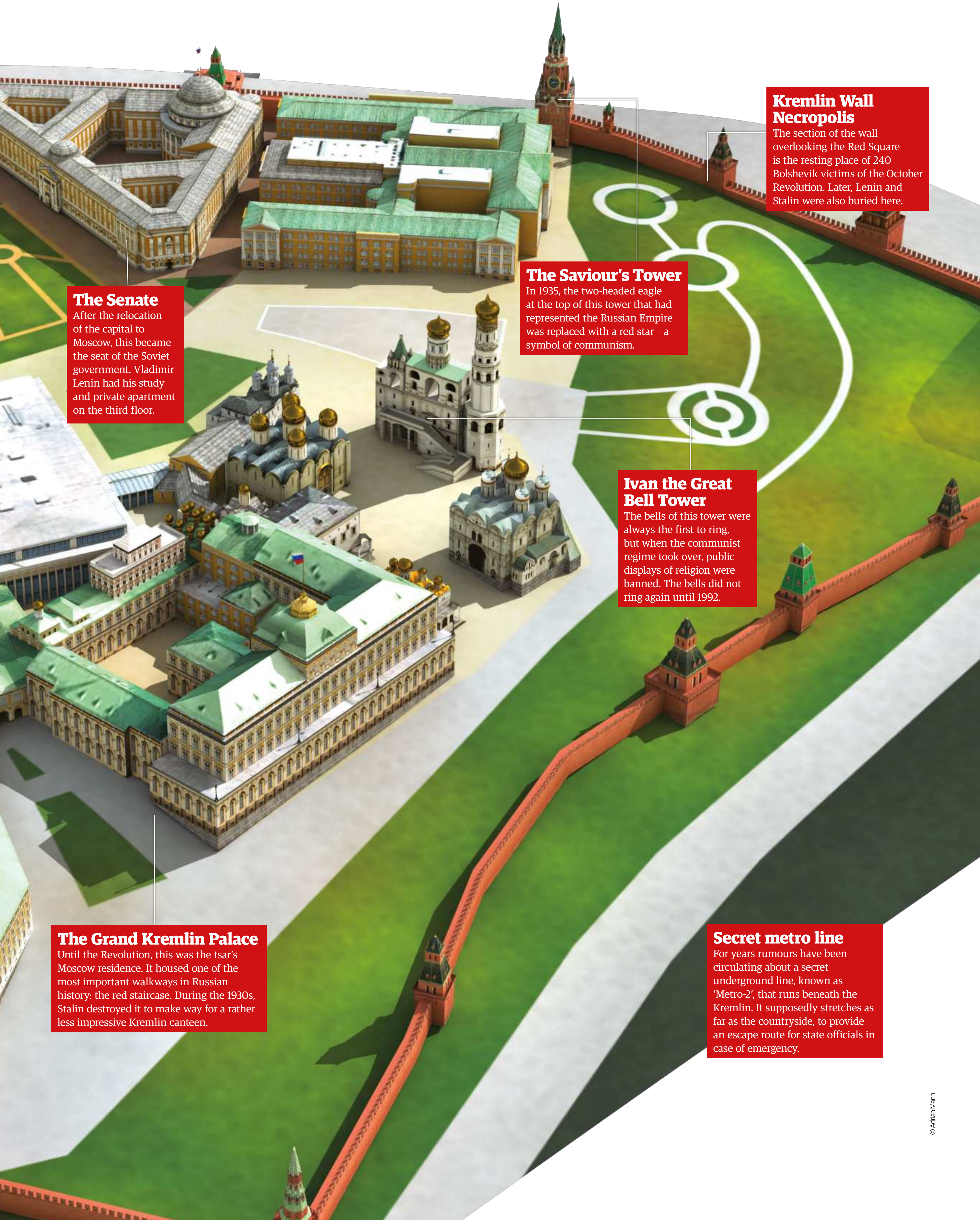
Lenin had his personal quarters here, and later installed his own rooms and offices. He was determined to destroy all evidence of the tsarist regime, and tore down many of the Kremlin's palaces and statues to make way for new ones. Cathedrals were rendered useless, as the USSR became the first modern state with an ideological aim to eliminate religion.

After the fall of communism it became the home of the Russian government and its president, and is now visited by over a million curious tourists each year.



The State Kremlin Palace
Built in the 1960s as an arena for Communist Party meetings, the palace is now famous for its pop concerts.

Entrance
The residence of the Soviet government was strictly off-limits to the public until 1955, when Krushchev ordered the 'de-Stalinisation' of Russia.



Kremlin Wall Necropolis

The section of the wall overlooking the Red Square is the resting place of 240 Bolshevik victims of the October Revolution. Later, Lenin and Stalin were also buried here.

The Saviour's Tower

In 1935, the two-headed eagle at the top of this tower that had represented the Russian Empire was replaced with a red star – a symbol of communism.

The Senate

After the relocation of the capital to Moscow, this became the seat of the Soviet government. Vladimir Lenin had his study and private apartment on the third floor.

Ivan the Great Bell Tower

The bells of this tower were always the first to ring, but when the communist regime took over, public displays of religion were banned. The bells did not ring again until 1992.

The Grand Kremlin Palace

Until the Revolution, this was the tsar's Moscow residence. It housed one of the most important walkways in Russian history: the red staircase. During the 1930s, Stalin destroyed it to make way for a rather less impressive Kremlin canteen.

Secret metro line

For years rumours have been circulating about a secret underground line, known as 'Metro-2', that runs beneath the Kremlin. It supposedly stretches as far as the countryside, to provide an escape route for state officials in case of emergency.

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THE
RUSSIAN CIVIL WAR

Lenin won his revolution but a civil war nearly cost him his new regime

WRITTEN BY GREG KING

On March 3, 1918, Russia signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with imperial Germany and the other Central Powers, ending Russian participation in World War I. Ending the war was long one of Lenin's goals, but it came at a heavy price. With the single sweep of a pen, Russia lost a quarter of its population and a third of its territory. Ukraine, Finland, the Baltic Provinces, vast areas in the Caucasus, and Poland were handed over to Germany or declared as independent.

Lenin had acted from political and military expediency: Russia was in no position to continue the war. The army, such as it was, had fallen apart as former Tsarist generals refused to fight for the Bolshevik cause. In an effort to counter-act desertions and mutinies, Trotsky had formed a number of Red Army battalions loyal to Lenin, but they were poorly trained and unlikely to engage in sustained fighting. When German troops threatened to march on Petrograd, a worried government had hastily relocated to Moscow. To forestall disaster, Lenin had bowed to the inevitable and made peace.

Disgusted with these concessions, anti-Bolshevik forces began coalescing into military units, matched on the other side by Trotsky's special detachments. The Volunteer Army began sporadic fighting in the German-occupied Ukraine in the spring of 1918, and their victories soon spread to much of Southern Russia and into the Caucasus. The most significant threat to Bolshevik rule, though, emerged accidentally. Czech prisoners of war, captured from the army of Austria-Hungary, had fought alongside the Russians throughout 1917. After the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, the Bolsheviks agreed to repatriate the 30,000 soldiers via Vladivostok at the eastern edge of Siberia. But in May 1918, Trotsky ordered their arrest and disarmament and the Czech forces in Siberia rebelled; soon they had joined forces with other anti-Bolshevik troops and Russia's Civil War began.

The Czechs, troops of the Volunteer Army, former Tsarist officers and soldiers, Cossacks, conservatives, members of the middle class, and others opposed to the Bolsheviks coalesced to form the White Army, which was led by Generals

“FOREIGN INTERVENTION POSED A SERIOUS THREAT TO THE CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF LENIN’S STRUGGLING REGIME”

Nicholas Yudenich and Anton Denikin, and by Admiral Alexander Kolchak. Though its disparate elements shared few goals, the White Army proved to be a powerful force: in the summer of 1918 it captured most of Siberia from the Bolsheviks and drove the Red Army into retreat. By autumn, the Bolsheviks had been chased out of Russia’s Central Asian and Caucasus provinces, and large portions of the Volga region fell to the Whites as well.

The White Army established its own Russian Provisional Government, headquartered in the Siberian city of Omsk, which posed a serious threat to the survival of Lenin’s new regime. As War Commissar, Trotsky instituted mandatory conscription into the Red Army, hoping to repel the anti-Bolshevik forces. Matters in Moscow grew tenuous that summer. The Western Allies worried that Russia’s withdrawal from the war would free up German troops and prolong the conflict; the White Army promised to renounce the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk and continue the fight. It did not take long for these allies to side with the anti-Bolshevik forces. In April of 1918 the first members of a British Expeditionary Force had landed at Vladivostok, along with a number of Japanese marines; more British troops followed that summer, landing in Archangel and, with their French and American counterparts, in Murmansk. Numbering some 10,000 soldiers, they all joined up with the Whites hoping to drive the Bolsheviks from power.

This foreign intervention posed a serious threat to the continued existence of Lenin’s struggling regime, but that late summer of 1918 witnessed even more troubling developments. In July, the Left Socialist Revolutionaries, who formed a substantial part of Lenin’s uneasy coalition, abruptly quit the government and staged an abortive coup; a week later, former Tsar Nicholas II and his family were executed in Ekaterinburg by members of the Ural Regional Soviet. Despite the mythology, no evidence exists that Lenin ordered their deaths. Then, in August, a Socialist Revolutionary named Fanny Kaplan shot Lenin while he was giving a speech; although he recovered, he had been badly injured and would never again regain his former strength.

Moscow responded in September, formally launching the Red Terror, meant to stamp out all counter-revolutionary activity. Over the next few years, the Cheka arrested, tortured and killed thousands of suspected traitors. Terror and brutality soon became a way of life as Russia plunged further into the Civil War. Executions without trial, mass shootings, the punitive burning of villages, and imprisonment as political and military tools were adopted by both sides, White and Red.

The Red Army began racking up victories throughout the autumn; the eventual withdrawal of the Allied expeditionary forces over the next 14 months left the Whites depleted and disillusioned. In November General Kolchak staged a coup and declared himself Supreme Ruler of Russia, but his men were losing ground in Siberia. Throughout 1919, battles were waged but the Whites were losing men while Trotsky’s forced conscription kept the ranks of the Red Army strong. In the south, Denikin’s White Army and volunteer forces were driven from Kiev and the Volga region; by the summer of 1919, Bolshevik troops had been forced to retreat to the Crimean Peninsula and Denikin launched an offensive meant to retake Moscow. But the White losses in Siberia freed up Bolshevik troops who regularly began repulsing attacks; poorly armed, Denikin’s army was forced into retreat as a resurgent Red Army swept across Southern Russia, recapturing city after city. In October 1919 General Yudenich launched an assault on Petrograd that very nearly took the former capital; only quick thinking by Trotsky, who armed suburban residents and urged them to fight, saved the Bolsheviks from losing the city.

In November 1919 the Red Army captured Omsk, driving Admiral Kolchak even further east as the Whites lost Siberia. A month later, Kolchak was overthrown in a military coup and executed. His replacement, General Nicholas Semenov, proved an ineffective leader, and by 1920 the Whites had all but been driven out of Siberia. Denikin’s army was gone, and now only forces led by General Peter Wrangel in the Crimea offered any anti-Bolshevik resistance. Though they fought valiantly they could not match the superior numbers and firepower of the Reds and in November 1920 they evacuated Crimea.

There would be intermittent battles between White Army pockets and the Reds throughout 1921, but Russia’s Civil War was essentially over. The conflict carried over into the short-lived Polish-Soviet War, but by that point in time, Lenin’s Red Army was exhausted and he was forced to sign a treaty recognising Polish sovereignty over millions of White Russians and Ukrainians. No one knows precisely how many people perished in the Civil War. Estimates ran as high as 12 million casualties, the majority of them civilians who were killed both in the military conflicts as well as in the punitive Red Terror and its White counterpart.

Perhaps as deadly were the effects of Lenin’s “War Communism”, during which all industry was nationalised and all surplus food and grain produced by peasants was commandeered for use by the Red Army. The result was widespread famine across Russia, a situation exacerbated by severe droughts in many agricultural areas. Up to five million Russians are believed to have died of starvation in 1921, even as the Civil War wound to its close.

Freed at last from internal military threats, Lenin now faced the seemingly overwhelming task of rebuilding Russia and consolidating Bolshevik power. Widespread dissatisfaction with economic conditions threatened the survival of the state. To save the situation, Lenin introduced his New Economic Policy in the spring of 1921. The policy was something of a retreat from his core Marxist principles, though. It allowed for the creation of a limited free market system based

© Wiki. Pyotr Novitsky (1885–1942) Blue pencil.svg wikidata:Q30101257

Clockwise from top: Lenin, with his wife and sister; civil war victims; Red Army volunteers

on capitalist ideas, although one that was still subject to state control.

The only goal that was remaining was the consolidation of power. In April 1922, the Tenth Party Congress met in Moscow. Lenin now demanded that all political factions except for the Communist Party be banned, with the warning that they could be "harmful" and often promoted rebellions. The Congress agreed, and Russia formally became a single party state. Later on that year delegates from all of the varied Soviet Socialist Republics gathered in Moscow. There was but one item on the agenda: to achieve his final goal, Lenin wanted the country to be united. With all political opposition now outlawed, the outcome was assured and the event ended with the creation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Lenin had lived to see his long-dreamed-of revolution come into being, though the victory had been long and hard fought. He now stood at the head of an immense communist state, but ironically his influence was on the wane. Lenin never recovered from the wounds he had received during the assassination attempt in 1918, and in the absence of his leadership a new figure had begun to rise to power: Joseph Stalin. Lenin was wary of the enigmatic man from Georgia, but by now he was powerless to stop him. On 21 January 1924, Lenin died at the age of 53, leaving a tangled legacy of achievement and repression that would reverberate throughout the 20th century.

ADMIRAL KOLCHAK

Alexander Kolchak led the anti-Bolshevik White Army in Siberia but came to a bloody end

A former decorated Tsarist naval officer, Admiral Alexander Kolchak was vehemently anti-Communist and led the White Army in Siberia during Russia's Civil War. Kolchak was a popular figurehead in the White movement but as a military commander he proved largely unable to meet the rolling challenges of the fight against the Red Army, having no practical military experience on land. White Army victories in Siberia under his leadership were often accidental, or came at the impetus of other leaders.

Kolchak also proved to be a divisive figure: he refused to work with ethnic minorities, harboured the anti-Semitic prejudices common to many in Russia, and believed in an almost autocratic use of power. Yet he remained a commanding figurehead. In November 1918 a British-engineered coup overthrew the unpopular anti-Bolshevik regional government in Omsk in western Siberia and Kolchak was installed as Supreme Leader and Commander-in-Chief of the White Army. "My chief aims," Kolchak declared, "are the organisation of a fighting force, the overthrow of Bolshevism, and the establishment of law and order."

But victories by the Red Army over the next year drove Kolchak east. In January 1920, authorities arrested him in Irkutsk and he was handed over to the Social Revolutionaries, themselves soon after overthrown by the Bolsheviks. On 7 February 1920 a Bolshevik firing squad shot Kolchak and dumped his corpse into a river, ending his brief reign.

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RUSSIA'S TYRANT
STALIN

Despised by many but idolised by his adoring public, Stalin dyed the Soviet Union red with one of the most brutal regimes in history

WRITTEN BY FRANCES WHITE

Born the son of a poor cobbler in an illiterate family, Iosif Dzhugashvili seemed unlikely to one day become the dictator of the juggernaut that was the Soviet Union. Young Iosif had been born at a time of massive change. In his lifetime, the Tsars, which had ruled Russia for countless generations, would be thrown off the throne, giving this poor boy from Georgia the chance to claim ultimate power.

Stalin himself played little part in the famous revolution of October 1917, and it wasn't until the Russian Civil War of 1917 to 1921 that his commitment and organisation skills caught Lenin's attention and catapulted him through the ranks. After acquiring a taste of power, Stalin wanted more and aligned himself with the ailing Soviet leader. As Lenin's imminent death loomed, Stalin, who was now general secretary, used his tenacity and cunning to ensure everything was in place for his rapid rise to power. His opposition were ejected from the party, the Soviet Union and eventually lost their lives. Obsessed with ensuring his rule remained unquestioned, Stalin purged the land of anyone who dared question his authority. Soon all who remained were the few who were fiercely loyal, and the many who were terrified into obedience. Stalin's ruthlessness had won him the ultimate prize – the Soviet Union was his.

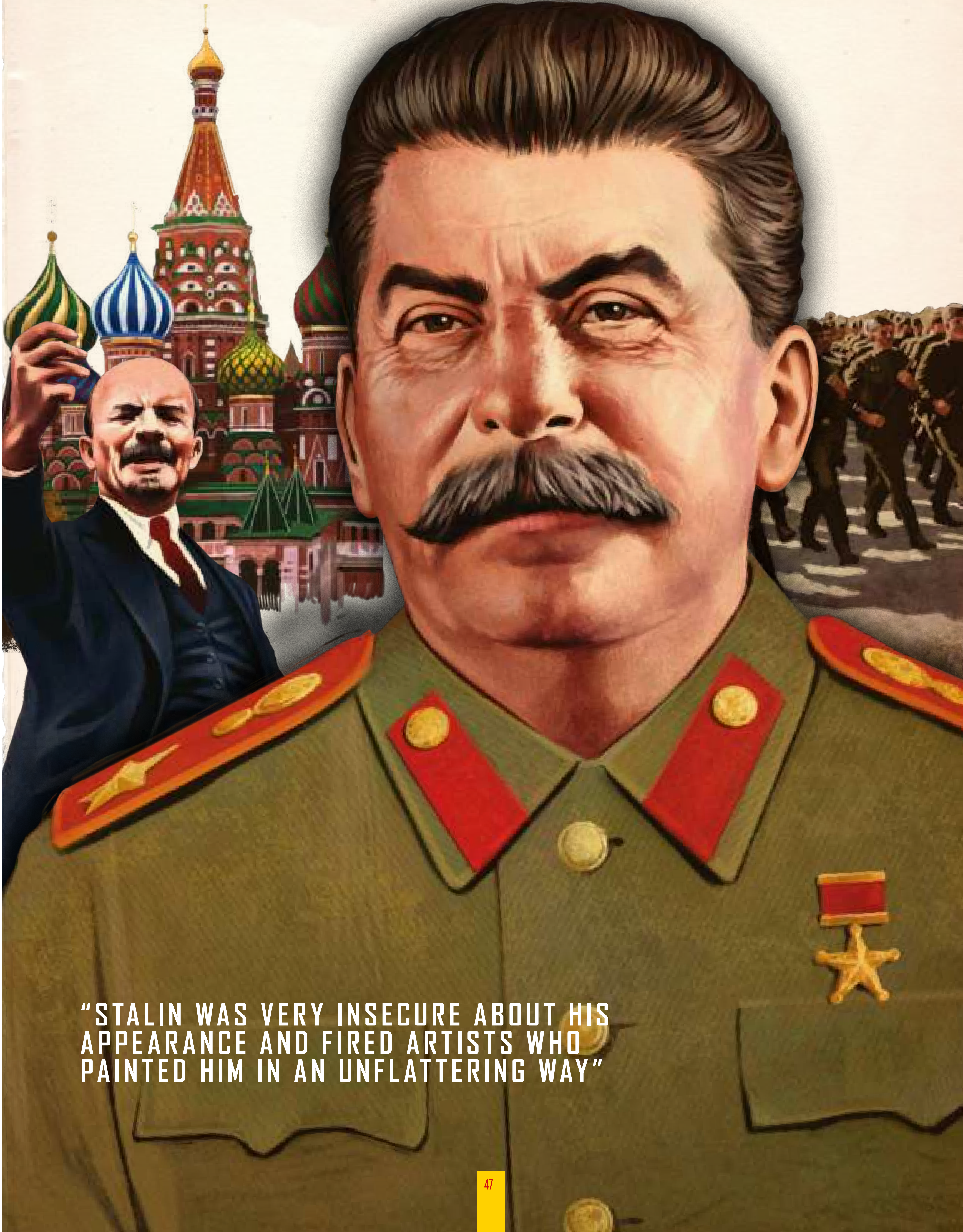
RISE TO POWER

THREE KEY REASONS FOR THE RISE OF THE MAN OF STEEL

1 Links with Lenin
When Lenin went into semi-retirement, Stalin acted as his intermediary with the outside world, with unprecedented access to the ailing leader. Stalin used this to his advantage after his death, elevating Lenin to a godlike figure with him as loyal disciple.

2 Political alliances
Stalin was able to set up an alliance with key figures in the Communist Party and replace enemies. Because of this Lenin's Testament, a document written by Lenin that called for Stalin's dismissal, was prevented from being revealed.

3 Reign of terror
Stalin was able to isolate and eject any members of the party who did not agree with him. This later turned into a regime of executions and the resulting atmosphere of fear ensured Stalin's authority would not be questioned.



“STALIN WAS VERY INSECURE ABOUT HIS APPEARANCE AND FIRED ARTISTS WHO PAINTED HIM IN AN UNFLATTERING WAY”

THE GREAT PURGE

Stalin was a fan of cowboy films and had his own private cinema where he hosted screenings

It is a cold winter's night in 1937. A black van screeches to a halt on a dark and silent street. A small group of men emerge from the car, silhouetted against the dim light of the flickering streetlamps; their heavy guns swinging at their sides. One casually flicks open a notebook as another lights his pipe and takes a long drag. With a word and gesture to a nearby house the group move as one. The ground crunches under the thick soles of their leather boots as they climb the steps and knock sharply on the door.

One flicks open the letterbox and screams harsh words through the small gap and eventually the door opens and a pale face appears. One of the men kicks the door open and the group storm through the house, flinging open doors and destroying anything in their path. A moment later they emerge into the street again, dragging with them a terrified young man who clings to his father. The older man's face is pale but stern, his jaw clenched. His silence is louder than his son's panicked pleas and cries.

The men continue their raid, storming through houses until eventually the entire street is full of men from 17 to 70, some dazed, others hysterical and some with that same strange haunting silence. As the guards point their guns and usher them into the van there is no word of explanation and the few who protest are beaten. As the door closes and the vehicle disappears into the night, those who remain return silently to their homes.

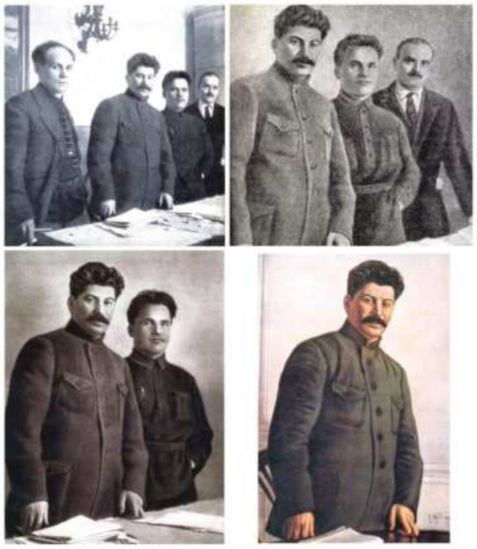
These were not the first victims of the terror that would come to be known as the Great Purge, and they would not be the last. These armed raids in the dead of night were not the work of a secret terrorist organisation, but the government itself, and there was no redemption or tearful reunion awaiting these victims, but only imprisonment, torture, forced confessions and execution.

Obtaining ultimate power was not enough for Stalin. Controlled by his incredible paranoia, suddenly everyone became a suspect in conspiring to overthrow his rule. The purge began when Sergey Kirov, a staunch Stalinist, was murdered in 1934. Stalin used his assassination as evidence that there was a plot against him. But it is thought by some that Stalin himself arranged the death of the well-liked politician whose popularity threatened his rule. This began the string of witch-hunts that went on to claim millions of innocent lives.

The purges first struck former senior Communist Party leaders in the famous Moscow Trials. These trials were covered by the Western media, who saw no problem with the guilty verdicts as the accused admitted to their crime of conspiring to assassinate Stalin. However, behind closed doors confessions were being beaten out of the accused with mental and physical torture, repeated threats against their families and assurances that their lives would be spared if they only pleaded guilty. They were not.

The purge then extended to the army, writers, artists, 'wealthy' farmers and eventually anyone who could be rounded up to make up the numbers of the 'minimum arrests' needed by the NKVD, the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs. Headed by Nikolai Yezhov, the NKVD troika were vicious courts of three people who would issue sentences without a full trial. Eventually the purge extended to the Communist Party itself, as almost all the Bolsheviks who had taken part in the 1917 Revolution were destroyed. From 1937 to 1938 some 1.2 million people met their death as a result of the purge. After his death, 357 lists were found bearing Stalin's own signature, authorising the executions of some 40,000 people. His calculated and cold approach to the millions of lives he destroyed so easily is starkly evident in a line he reportedly muttered while reviewing one such list; "Who's going to remember all this riff-raff in ten or 20 years' time? No one. Who remembers the names now of the boyars Ivan the Terrible got rid of? No one."

Many official images were edited to remove victims of the Great Purge



GULAGS

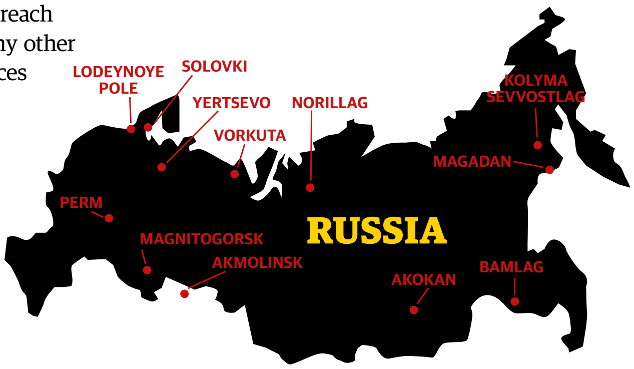
From the empty frozen plains of Siberia to the towering concrete of central cities, the brutal Gulag camps changed the face of Russia

When the term 'Gulag' was coined, it was used to refer to a government agency in charge of the forced labour camps. But to many today the word is representative of the entire Soviet system of repression.

The Gulag camps existed in a form before Stalin, though they did not bear that name. Known as 'corrective labour camps', the first was installed in 1918, but these early labour camps were very different to the ones Stalin would create. He transformed these camps, where the prisoners had relative freedom, into a widespread system of over 53 separate camps and 423 labour colonies all across the Soviet Union from the 1930s to 50s. These camps would imprison 14 million people and claim the lives of at least 1.6 million. The vast majority of the camps were in extremely remote, inhospitable regions of northeast Siberia. One of the locations for these camps, Kolyma, struck fear into the hearts of all Gulag prisoners. With a yearlong winter, Kolyma was an unforgiving place, impossible to reach overland. And the camps there, like many other Siberian camps, did not bother with fences or fortification; to seek escape in the vast freezing plains was to sentence oneself to death. The Gulag camps were not like the infamous Nazi concentration camps, which were designed to kill their prisoners, but the horrific conditions often resulted in the same outcome. The Gulags were more numerous, housed more prisoners and lasted for many more years than the brutal Nazi camps.

The prisoners, of whom a great majority had been imprisoned without trial, would face years of hard labour and minimal food. The more work they completed, the larger their ration of thin, tasteless soup, but as they were supplied with useless tools, achieving the high labour expectations was nearly impossible. With depleting food rations, and sometimes given only four hours' rest a day, the Gulag prisoners were worked to exhaustion and death. In the winter of 1941 alone, a quarter of the Gulags' population died of starvation. To Stalin the Gulags were essential. His purges were so fervent that any prisoner who died in the camps could instantly be replaced and the supply of cheap labour remained uninterrupted.

These prisoners played a key role in enabling Russia to win the Second World War, as they built railroads, ammunition and tanks and other machines. New camps were created wherever an economic task required cheap labour, such as the Sea-Baltic Canal. The Gulag institution was finally closed in 1960, but many of the practices, such as forced labour and prisoner intimidation, continue to exist in Russian prisons to this day.



LENIN	V	STALIN
Lenin's vision was a society run by the people for the people, with all resources shared equally. He wished to completely eradicate the idea of bourgeoisie (a social order ruled by the wealthy) and believed the power of the state would eventually fade away.	IDEALS	He used communism to further his own power and believed Russia would thrive with a powerful leader controlling the masses. He wished to eliminate the bourgeoisie, as well as any resistance of the working class.
National borders were deemed outdated and Lenin believed the world should engage in a unified revolution. He wished to spread communism across the planet and envisioned a merger of nations and the creation of a world state.	FOREIGN POLICY	An advocate of 'socialism in one country', Stalin believed the Soviet Union should focus on building communism in Soviet-controlled countries rather than encouraging a worldwide revolution that would be more difficult to control.
The New Economic Policy of 1921 allowed private individuals to own their own enterprises. This meant peasants could operate freely, keeping and trading their own produce. The idea of this was to encourage an independent economy.	ECONOMY	He wished to rapidly industrialise the economy and brought all agriculture under government control. Peasants were forced to live on group farms and there was seizure of grain hoards, land, machinery and livestock.
Lenin believed that all the oppressed people of the world had the right to self-determination, to rule themselves rather than submit to the will of the state. Lenin was also responsible for the Red Terror, where he ordered the executions of his opponents.	THE PEOPLE	There were mass purges of anyone who questioned Stalin's authority or agitated for changes to it. Stalin believed that political repression of the people was necessary to defend against the destruction of the Soviet Union.

MOST WANTED

Leon Trotsky

Position: Head of the Fourth International
Crime: Firmly opposed to Stalin as the leader of the Soviet Union
Fate: Assassinated on Stalin's orders on 21 August 1940

Nikolai Yezhov

Position: Head of the NKVD
Crime: Theft of government funds, homosexuality, collaboration with German spies
Fate: Arrested & shot on 4 February 1940

Nikolai Bukharin

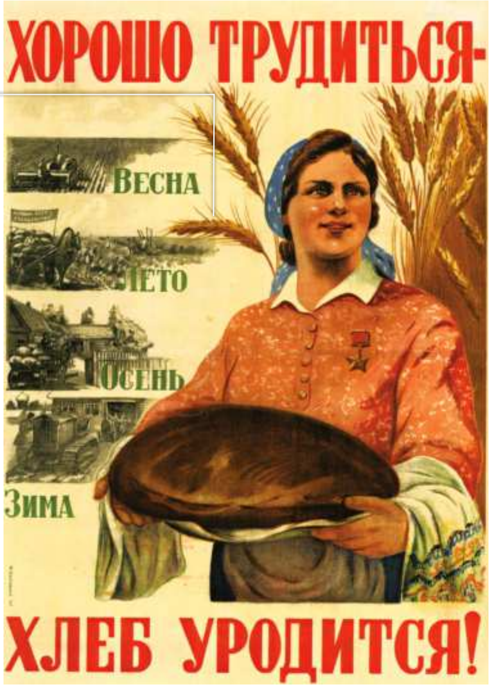
Position: General secretary of Comintern's executive committee
Crime: Conspiracy to overthrow the state
Fate: Arrested and executed on 15 March 1938

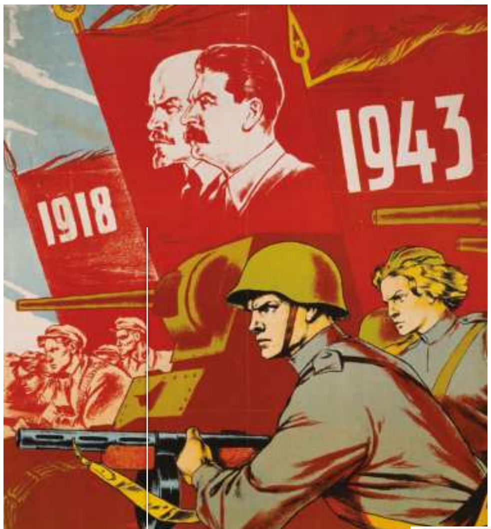
POWERFUL PROPAGANDA

Russia's 'man of steel' was a master at the art of propaganda, depicting and presenting himself as the hero of the nation

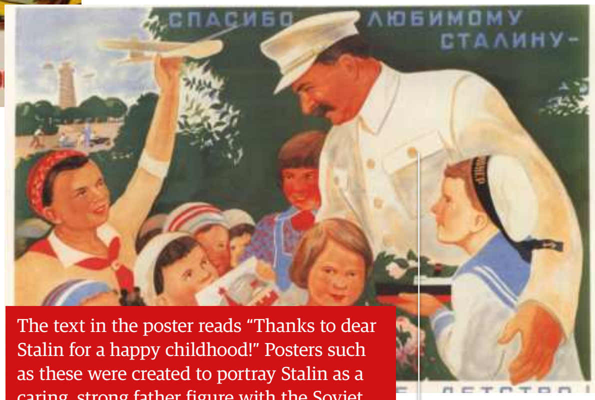
When Stalin turned 50 in December of 1929, a lavish celebration presented to the Russian people a messianic figure, the brother in arms of the adored Lenin, and his humble disciple. This marked the beginning of the cult of personality surrounding Stalin that would follow him until his death and even beyond. Through the use of propaganda, Russian history was rewritten. Stalin, not Trotsky, had served as Lenin's second in command during the October Revolution and he grew not only spiritually but physically too as his modest 162-centimetre (five-foot, four-inch) frame transformed to over 183 centimetres (six feet) in the towering statues built in his image. Stalin wasn't a cruel or vicious tyrant; he was a loving and strong father figure. The phrase "Thank you, dear comrade Stalin, for a happy childhood!" appeared all over schools and nurseries, with children chanting the slogan over and over again at festivals. The title 'Father' was stolen from the priests he eliminated from his land and associated firmly with Stalin alone. And it was this 'Father Stalin' who the people adored, trusted and venerated, as the real man secretly orchestrated the deaths of millions of their families and friends.

This poster urges people to "Work well - you will have a good wheat crop!" Posters like this were used to rouse the enthusiasm of farmers and agriculture workers to work toward rehabilitating the country after it had been ravaged by WWII. The vertical illustrations present an image of the ideal farm over the seasons of the year.





The text reads "Long live the 25th anniversary of the Leninist-Stalinist Komsomol." The Komsomol was the youth division of the Communist Party, and this poster encouraged youngsters to join by displaying a powerful united force of Stalin and Lenin. Once part of the organisation, every aspect of the youth's life would be lived in accordance to the Party doctrine.



The text in the poster reads "Thanks to dear Stalin for a happy childhood!" Posters such as these were created to portray Stalin as a caring, strong father figure with the Soviet population as his children. In turn, this would encourage the people's trust, respect and obedience to his regime.

TIMELINE OF A TYRANT

18 December 1878

The cobbler's son
Stalin is born as Iosif Dzhugashvili. He suffers from smallpox, which scars his face, and aged 12 his left arm is injured, leaving it shorter than the other.

1894-1899

Life in the priesthood
Stalin attends Tiflis Spiritual Seminary after receiving a scholarship. During his training he discovers the ideas of Marx and Engels and is inspired. He is expelled after missing his final exams.

1903

Political life begins
Stalin learns that Lenin has formed the Bolsheviks, a political group that follows the teachings of Marx.

1917

A taste of power
As the Bolsheviks seize power, Stalin rises through the ranks and is appointed the People's Commissar for Nationality Affairs. This position gives him his first taste of real power,.

1922

The steady rise
Lenin appoints Stalin as General Secretary. Lenin suffers a stroke.

1924-1927

The dictator
Lenin dies and a vicious struggle for power ensues. Stalin manages to eject his rivals, such as Trotsky.

1928-1933

Five-year plan
Stalin begins the seizure of farms and factories., resulting in famine.

1934-1940

The red terror
Stalin begins a campaign of political repression: the Great Purge. 20 million Russians are sent to Gulag camps .

1941-1945

War leader
Adolf Hitler breaks the non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union, Stalin joins the Allies.

5 March 1953

Death of a dictator
Stalin suffers from a stroke and isn't found for several hours; his guards fear disturbing him. He remains bedridden for several days before dying on 5 March 1953; rumours that he was poisoned persist through the media.

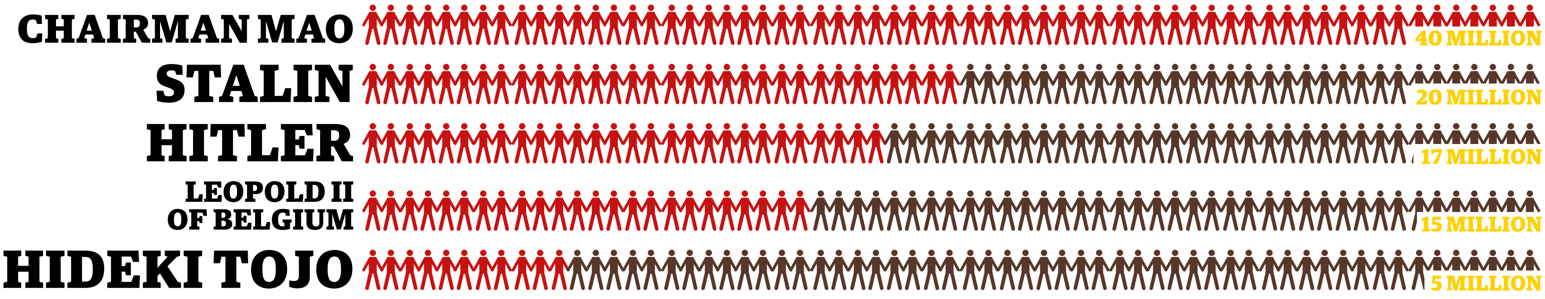
CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

Stalin's Russia wasn't the place to be caught - or even accused of - committing a crime

Late to work three times	The punishment for repeated offences of tardiness was to be sent to the Gulag for three years. There the offenders would face up to 14 hours a day of hard physical labour.
Telling a joke about a government official	You could face a punishment of up to 25 years in a Gulag camp for this crime. Ivan Burylov wrote the word 'Comedy' on his 'secret' ballot paper and was sentenced to eight years.
Petty theft	The sentence for stealing state property, usually food, was ten years of hard labour in a Gulag. This would often be extended without explanation and the convicts forced to live in exile once released.
Conspiracy to prepare uprising	Those accused of political crimes usually became victims of the purge and were executed. Close friends and family members would also be hunted out and disposed of.
Working in Germany	Many citizens of the Baltic States were forced to work in Germany during WWII. They were later arrested for this 'crime' and were sentenced to ten years of forced labour in a Gulag camp.
Practising Christianity	In the late-1920s there was a mass purge of Christian intellectuals and closure of churches. Anyone found practising the religion was arrested, sent to Gulag camps or executed.

THE WORST DICTATOR?

Find out the estimated number of deaths that history's worst dictators are thought to have caused



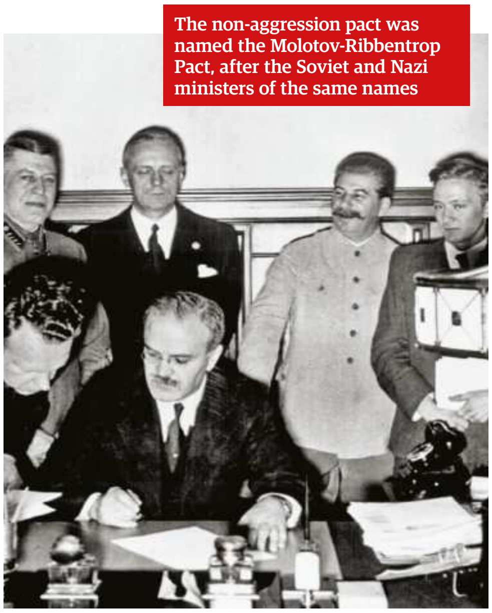
WORLD WAR II

In the carnage of WWII, Stalin aligned his country with the 'decadent' West to defeat Hitler's Nazis

By the late-1930s Stalin had found himself with very few international friends. After his attempts to sign an anti-German military alliance with Britain and France failed he was forced to ally with the last country he'd ever imagine – Nazi Germany. The Soviet Union entered into a non-aggression pact on 23 August 1939. Hitler needed this to eliminate his fear of a war on two fronts; eight days later Germany invaded Poland and the world was catapulted into war.

Although it was obvious to Stalin that the pact was only there to delay an inevitable conflict between the two powers, when Hitler invaded the Soviet Union in 1941, the Soviet leader was in shock. He had ignored the warnings of Churchill, shot German deserters who had warned him of the coming attack and even supplied Germany with supplies. Stalin retreated to his dacha for three days, ignoring telephone calls and refusing to see anyone. He was facing the brutal reality of his own actions – a weakened military of which his own purge had eliminated 40,000 men and key, talented advisors. But when he emerged it was as exactly the leader Russia needed. In the face of war, only the 'man of steel' possessed the strength required to unite his people.

Unite them he did. As Hitler's army drove its way into the Soviet Union, Stalin's forces fought to push them back. The hard-fought victory finally came, but Stalin was now focused on achieving dominance over Eastern and Central Europe, and soon a very different, colder war would begin.



The non-aggression pact was named the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, after the Soviet and Nazi ministers of the same names

EXPERT OPINION

WHAT KIND OF MILITARY LEADER WAS RUSSIA'S ULTIMATE TYRANT?

Geoffrey Roberts

Professor Geoffrey Roberts is Head of the School of History at UCC. His books include *Stalin's Wars: From World War To Cold War, 1939-1953* and *Stalin's General: The Life Of Georgy Zhukov*, which was the winner of the Society for Military History Distinguished Book Award for Biography.

How involved a war leader was Stalin?

Stalin was involved in every aspect of the Soviet war effort – military, political, economic and diplomatic. He worked 16 hours a day and signed thousands of decrees and orders. Everyone who had dealings with him during the war was amazed by his knowledge of the technical details of the modern war machine. As Supreme Commander he was centrally involved in devising military strategy and directing large-scale operations. He was the indispensable figure of the Soviet high command.

Was Stalin a tactically astute leader?

Politically and diplomatically Stalin was highly astute. That is apparent from the close personal connections he forged with Churchill and Roosevelt during the war and the influence he exercised within the Allied grand alliance. [Regarding the military] Stalin was stronger on strategy than tactics and he made some bad mistakes during the first few months of the war. But he learnt from his mistakes and to take more notice of professional military advice.

Stalin's finest hour was in November 1941 when he decided to stay in Moscow when the Germans were at the gates of the Soviet capital. Stalin's presence in Moscow and some inspiring patriotic speeches he gave helped to steady Soviet nerves and defences, and bought time for the preparation of a massive counter-offensive in December 1941 that drove the Germans away from the city.

There are many great victories to choose from but the Battle of Stalingrad stands out. Summer 1942 was another moment of crisis for the Soviet Union when a German thrust south threatened the security of Soviet oil supplies. Stalingrad, which barred the way to the German advance, almost fell to them, but the Red Army staged a heroic defence and managed to hang on to a bridgehead in the city. Once again, Stalin and his generals held their nerve and carefully prepared a counter-stroke that encircled the Germans in Stalingrad and forced them to surrender. Stalingrad was a defeat from which the Germans never really recovered.

What was his greatest failure?

It is often said that Stalin's greatest failure was that he did not anticipate the German invasion of Russia in June 1941. I think the failure was more one of strategic imagination and preparation. Stalin and his generals underestimated the power of the German attack and overestimated the strength of Soviet defences and their capacity to counter-attack. Stalin knew the Germans were going to attack, if not precisely when, but he was confident he and the Red Army could deal with all contingencies, including a surprise attack. In a sense he was right – the Soviet Union was able to survive the German invasion, but the cost was enormous and almost catastrophic. By the end of 1941 the Germans had reached Moscow, surrounded Leningrad and penetrated deep into the southern USSR. Perhaps the most grievous loss was Kiev, the Ukrainian capital, which fell to the Germans in September 1941. Stalin personally refused to allow the withdrawal of the Red Army from the Kiev area, with the result that several hundred thousand troops were encircled and captured by their German enemies.

Do you think the massive casualties of the Soviet army affected Stalin?

Stalin was a person of great feeling but little human empathy. He could be a very emotional person, subject to violent mood swings, and often displayed great sentimentality as well as anger. He was also an ideologue and an intellectual who thought in terms of grand designs and abstractions and spent much of his life engrossed in the written word and in political contexts that were sheltered from the brutal realities of war. These latter qualities helped inoculate Stalin from the sufferings of his troops. Stalin was utopian and an idealist who believed that the ends justified the means, and he had the emotional make-up that enabled taking and living with numerous extremely harsh decisions.

How much did Stalin's leadership contribute to the ultimate victory?

I have made myself unpopular with people who see only evil in Stalin by arguing that the Soviet dictator was the one essential Allied leader during the Second World War. Without his leadership the Soviet Union would in all probability have lost the war with Nazi Germany. The Soviet system that confronted Hitler's regime was Stalin's system, the system he had created in the 1920s and '30s. If Stalin hadn't performed well during the war the system would have collapsed in the face of the devastating blows it received. There was no substitute Soviet leader.

How would you sum up Stalin's leadership style during WWII?

He did great harm to millions of innocent people as well as serving humanity well in defeating Hitler and the Nazis.

STALIN'S DIPLOMACY

How the Soviet leader tried to control and manage the only men who could rival him for power

Adolf Hitler

The Father and the Führer

As a fascist and a communist, Hitler and Stalin couldn't be further apart politically. Hitler's frequent condemnation of the Soviet Union and claims that Slavic people were inferior did little to help relations. However, it became in both of their interests to ally with each other. Of course, this façade of friendship did not last long, as Hitler invaded Soviet territory and the anticipated war broke out. The two dictators shared a certain respect for the other's power though, and Hitler is quoted as saying, "Stalin is one of the most extraordinary figures in world history. He began as a small clerk and he has never stopped being a clerk. Stalin owes nothing to rhetoric. He governs from his office, thanks to a bureaucracy that obeys his every nod and gesture."

Winston Churchill

Putting up the Iron Curtain

The relationship between these two great leaders started off on rocky ground – Churchill's hatred of communism was well known, and Stalin was suspicious of the Western powers who he believed had abandoned his Red Army. But in order to beat the German invasion, they had to assume a united front. Churchill was satisfied that his charm and personality had won the dictator over, but Stalin had secretly installed a network of spies in London and could plan his own perfect 'performance' when dealing with the British leader. Although photos and film footage show the two men seemingly free of past misgivings, in reality Stalin would always be the one nut Churchill was unable to crack.

Franklin D Roosevelt

Looking after Uncle Joe

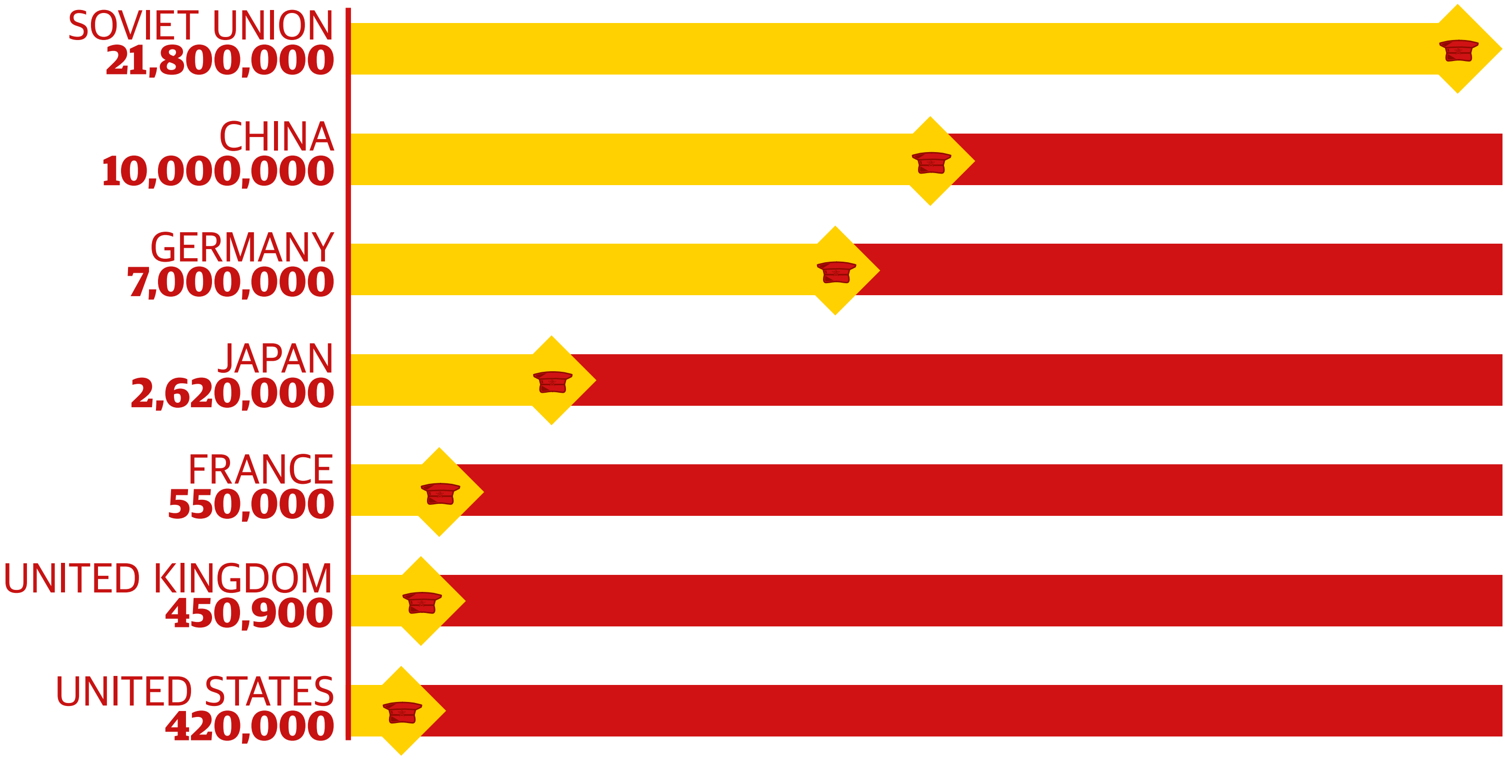
Roosevelt possessed a close relationship with Churchill and this was something he believed could be extended to Stalin, despite warnings from Churchill not to trust the Soviet leader. Roosevelt repeatedly sided with Stalin in order to encourage this relationship, which he believed would prevent Soviet expansion after the war. Instead of standing up to Stalin, something his advisors pushed for, Roosevelt gave him whatever he wanted and referred to him affectionately as 'Uncle Joe.' This naivety was pounced on and exploited by the Soviet dictator, and the results in the coming years proved Roosevelt's approach to be disastrous to the Soviet-American partnership he desired.

Benito Mussolini

The two tyrants

Despite believing in very different political systems, communism and fascism, Stalin and Mussolini had a lot in common. They both tried to establish governments with complete control over their citizens, they used propaganda to do so and they transformed their countries. Mussolini had some admiration toward Stalin, mainly due to his respect for Lenin, but when he allied with Hitler he eliminated any chance of the two men forming a friendship. The Russian dictator considered the Italian leader to be weak and little more than a puppet for Hitler to use as he saw fit. Stalin dismissed Mussolini, paying him and his actions very little attention.

A HEAVY PRICE: WWII'S DEATH TOLL



5 FACTS ABOUT STALINGRAD

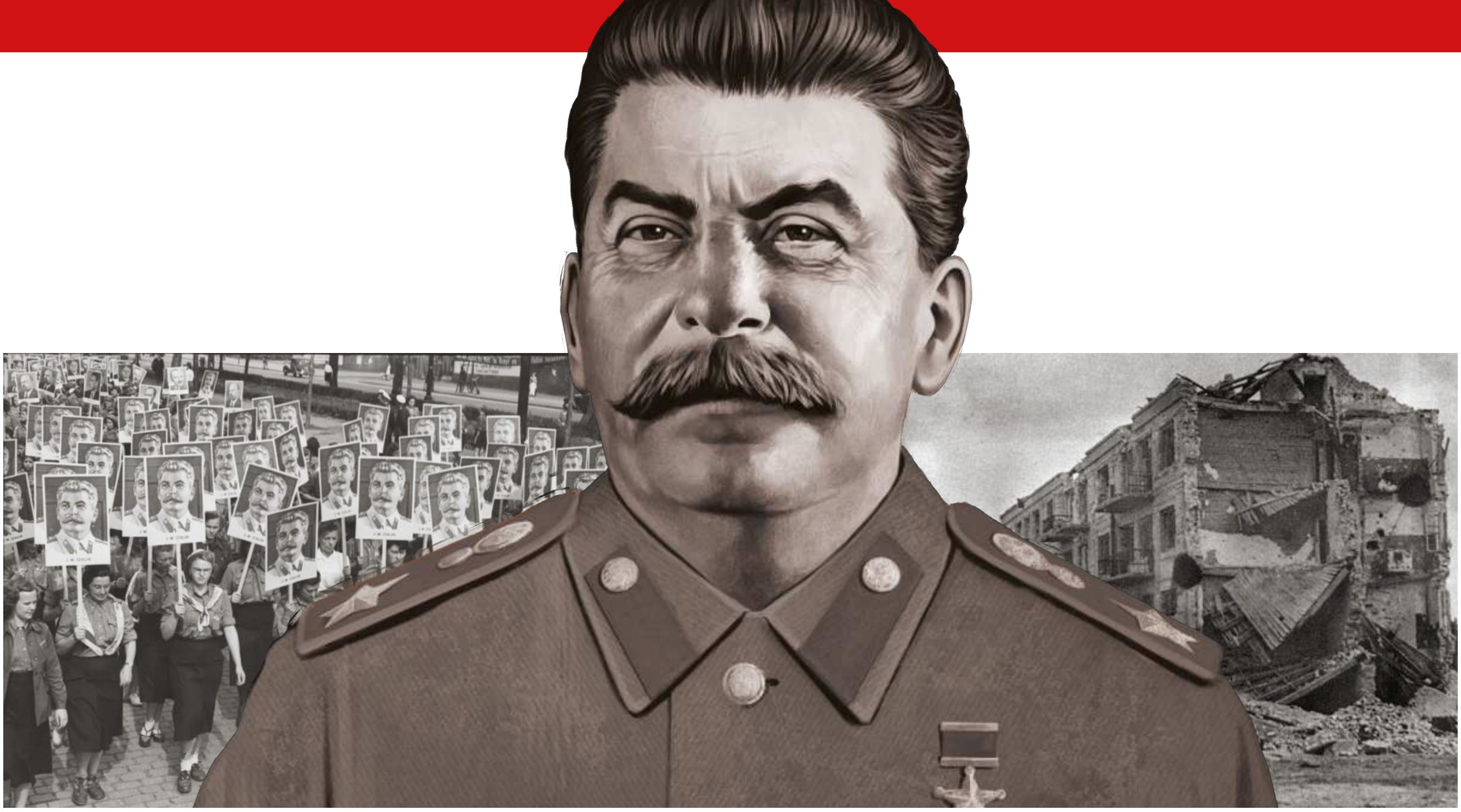
1 110,000 German soldiers were taken prisoner at Stalingrad; by the end of the war only 5,000 of them returned to Germany.

2 Hitler ordered the Sixth Army commander Paulus to fight to the last bullet, who commented, "I've no intention of shooting myself for this Bohemian corporal."

3 One of the deliveries dropped to the German soldiers amid the biting Russian winter was 20 tons of vodka and summer uniforms.

4 The living conditions of the soldiers were so terrible that a Red Army conscript assigned to Stalingrad had a life expectancy of just 24 hours.

5 A national day of mourning was ordered by Hitler, not for the loss of men but for the shame the surrender brought to Germany.



GREAT RULER OR TYRANT?

LOVING FATHER

Stalin adored and doted on his only daughter Svetlana, calling her his "little sparrow." Possessing the red hair and freckles of his own beloved mother, Svetlana described the pride on her father's face as he watched her drive a car: "He sat next to me, beaming with joy. My father couldn't believe I knew how to drive." Even when she sought asylum in the USA she refused to condemn her father, proclaiming the love and respect she felt for him.

Stalin's treatment of his first son, Yakov, was so severe that he attempted to take his own life. He survived, but Stalin simply responded by saying, "He can't even shoot straight." Yakov went on to serve in the Red Army but was captured in WWII. His safe return was promised to his father in exchange for German Field Marshal Friedrich Paulus. Stalin rejected this offer. It is believed that Yakov then committed suicide by running into an electric fence at a concentration camp.

MODERNISATION

During his years as dictator Stalin led the Soviet Union out of its previously backward economy and moved it forward with mass industrialisation. Stalin's five-year plans achieved rapid modernisation despite a very weak economy. New products were developed, the scale and efficiency of production increased and ultimately this mass industrialisation helped greatly in achieving a Soviet victory in WWII.

Although the economic growth under Stalin was significant, figures of the rate of growth are greatly disputed – ranging from the official estimate of 13.9 per cent to the low Western figure of 2.9 per cent. One thing is certain, though; the cost of this modernisation was millions of innocent lives. Stalin's brutal regime caused mass famine across the rural population, with a final death toll of up to 10 million people.

DEATH

When Stalin died, the collective grief that swept through his people was tangible. People wept openly and on his funeral mass wakes were held across the country. To many Stalin was their country's greatest leader, winning WWII and purging the land of those who would plunge Russia back into the rule of the Tsars. When his body was placed in the Hall of Columns, people lined to pay their respects for three days and nights.

In the early hours of 2 March 1953 Stalin suffered a stroke. Despite being the most powerful man in Russia, he lay helpless, alone and soaked in his own stale urine until 10pm that night. Ironically, it was the reign of terror that he himself had constructed that put the final nail in his own coffin, as his guards were scared that entering his room and disobeying his orders would result in their death.

SOCIAL FREEDOM

Women's lives improved significantly under Stalin's rule. They enjoyed equal rights in education and employment, allowing them to succeed in careers previously closed to them. The generation born during Stalin's rule was the first almost universally literate generation in Russian history. Universal healthcare also increased the average life span and sent the numbers of diseases like typhus and cholera to a record low.

Many basic human rights were removed under Stalin and he conducted a removal of all religion through the use of atheistic education, anti-religious propaganda and discriminatory laws. Churches, mosques, temples and sacred monuments were destroyed. Anyone who showed association with religion ran the risk of being killed, along with the tens of thousands of priests, monks and nuns who were martyred under his orders.

THE HOLODOMOR

Beginning in 1932, a vast famine swept Ukraine. Millions died in the tragedy known as Holodomor, but the causes and Stalin's role in exacerbating the crisis remain controversial

WRITTEN BY GREG KING

Between 1932-1933, millions of people died from a brutal famine in Ukraine. The roots of the crisis lay in diminished harvests, but the catastrophe was exacerbated by an unforgiving Soviet policy of collectivisation and deliberate efforts by Stalin to crack down on Ukrainian separatism. For decades the Soviet Union denied the tragedy; even today the causes of it and the death toll remain subjects of international controversy.

The tragedy is known as the Holodomor, which is derived from the Ukrainian words holod, meaning 'hunger', and mor, indicating 'plague' or 'death'. As such, the term 'Holodomor' roughly translates as 'to kill by starvation'. This reflects the widespread view that much of the famine was man-made, a deliberate creation of the Stalinist regime to weaken the resolve of the Ukrainian population.

In 1929 Stalin introduced agricultural collectivization as part of his first Five Year Plan, forcing families to hand over their private farms, livestock and equipment to authorities and to work for the government. This policy proved difficult in the Ukraine, which had long provided Russia with the majority of its agriculture. The wealthier peasants had the most to lose: the state branded them 'Kulaks' ('tight-fisted') and denounced them as enemies of the USSR; in truth, many of the condemned were poor, but their resistance to collectivisation marked them out for retribution from those who embraced it.

Starting in 1930, the state began to liquidate them. Some were evicted from their farms and sent to labour camps; some were arrested and exiled; some were executed. By 1932, nearly 2 million Ukrainian resisters had been sent to Siberia, where, lacking food or housing, they often perished from hunger and exposure.

Collectivisation hampered productivity. Left without incentive, the yield of some farmers decreased; the arrest and exile of others also left a significant gap in the available manpower. Ukraine had largely harvested wheat; the Five Year Plan disrupted the established order by insisting that collective farms add cotton or sugar beets to their crops. The success rate for these new introductions was dismal. Droughts played into the growing crisis, as did government confiscation of all crops and Stalin's decision

GENOCIDE OR NOT?

Although the Holodomor began as a natural disaster, many scholars believe that Stalin's anti-Ukrainian policies pushed the tragedy into the realm of deliberately enacted genocide

Few dispute that the onset of the Ukrainian famine owed its existence to natural phenomenon and bureaucratic ineptitude, but it is difficult to reconcile Stalin's anti-Ukrainian policies with any assertion that his intent was not the decimation of the Republic's ethnic majority. In 1953, Dr Raphael Lemkin, who wrote the United Nations' Genocide Convention, deemed the Holodomor as "a classic example of genocide" meant to cause "the destruction of the Ukrainian nation."

In 2003, 25 countries signed a joint UN statement: "In the former Soviet Union millions of men, women and children fell victims to the cruel actions and policies of the totalitarian regime. The Great Famine of 1932–1933 in Ukraine (Holodomor), took from 7 million to 10 million innocent lives and became a national tragedy for the Ukrainian people." The word "genocide" never appeared.

In October 2008 the European Parliament officially recognised the Holodomor as a crime against humanity, though it did not label it as genocide. Stung by these diplomatic decisions, the Ukrainian Parliament formally declared that the Holodomor had indeed been a deliberate act of genocide in November 2008. 15 other countries, including Australia, Canada, Poland, and Portugal, have also declared the Holodomor an act of genocide. Most European countries, Great Britain, and the United States, have condemned it as a crime against humanity but refuse to label it as genocide.

Carts filled with bread leaving Ukraine

Moscow expected Ukraine to provide a third of the country's grain harvest. When the numbers for 1931 came in they exceeded expectations; over-zealous local officials had collected more tons than called for in their quotas, resulting in a surprise surplus. Any good bureaucrat in Moscow could have spotted the disparity, but rather than view 1931 as an anomaly, they expected the same quotas to be met in 1932. Stalin would later blame the famine on officials who had over-estimated the harvest, but his own actions deliberately exacerbated the problem.

By July 1932, Ukrainian crops had yielded just a sixth of the previous year's harvest; by the end of the year only 4.3 tons of grain had been harvested, as opposed to 7.2 million the previous year. Unable to understand the devastating effect of the droughts, the loss of agricultural manpower and the change in crops as factors contributing to the looming crisis, Moscow insisted that the poor harvest was the work of Kulaks, Ukrainian nationalists, or foreign agents and began fomenting public opinion against Ukrainian farmers.

There is no doubt that Stalin's brutal Ukrainian policies were driven by his suspicion that the federation teemed with nationalists and anti-Soviet elements. In his increasing paranoia he saw enemies everywhere, and the famine became a convenient excuse he could use to root out those he viewed as enemies of the state.

In late 1932 the crisis passed from natural disaster to man-made tragedy. Stalin used the ongoing catastrophe to launch a programme of Ukrainian repression. Kulaks were not the only victims: Moscow's policies became, in effect, an organised effort to root out Ukrainian nationalism, and there was no measure too barbaric.

Stalin held Ukrainian intellectuals in particular contempt, believing that they worked to undermine the state in an attempt to achieve independence. In addition to the farmers, writers, professors, artists, poets and philosophers were also arrested, exiled, or shot. Within a few short years the federation's culture had all but been erased. Thus Stalin's policies became a deliberate, orchestrated effort to starve Ukraine into political and economic submission.

Officials in Moscow introduced a food rationing system that focused largely on industrial workers and urban residents; those involved in agriculture had reduced rations, and these were allotted based on the type and duration of labour, meaning the most vulnerable - the elderly, women and children - were often denied rations or received them only sporadically. Starvation soon became a problem.

On 7 August 1932, the Soviet Government introduced a new law, "On the Safekeeping of Socialist Property", which imposed draconian penalties on theft of anything deemed to belong to the state, including food or any unharvested grain. This law was largely directed only at Ukraine. It singled out "Kulaks, former traders, and other socially-alien persons" for harsh prison sentences of up to ten years or the death penalty. Three months later, Stalin issued an even more brutal order: "Starting today, there will be immediate cessation of delivery of goods, complete suspension of cooperative and state trade in the villages, and removal of all available goods from cooperative and state stores." Farmers deemed enemies of the state were no longer allowed to purchase goods or provisions necessary to sustain life. This order was to remain in place "until all collectives and individual peasants begin to honestly and conscientiously fulfil their duty to the working class and to the Red Army by supplying grain."

"BY THE SUMMER OF 1933, 24,000 PEOPLE WERE DYING OF STARVATION EVERY SINGLE DAY"

To enforce these new laws the state organised brutal quasi-military brigades of armed factory workers and soldiers, who raided villages and seized all grain and goods from those suspected of being enemies; those who resisted were shot. "The authorities confiscated all the bread," recalled one survivor, "removed it from the villages, loaded grain into the railway coaches and took it away someplace. They searched the houses, taking away everything to the smallest thing. All the vegetable gardens, all the cellars were raked out and everything was taken away."

Another law allowed these military brigades to confiscate all livestock from those farms that had failed to meet their quotas. Within six months nearly 55,000 people had been imprisoned and over 2,000 executed under these laws, numbers that continued to swell in 1933. To prevent the starving people from fleeing, the NKVD sealed the Ukrainian borders in January 1933 and imposed new internal passport restrictions, denying travel papers to the starving farmers and peasants. Military blockades went up and agents prowled the highways and railway stations. Under these measures, more than 200,000 people were arrested in early 1933, either imprisoned or sent back to their barren farms to die from hunger.

Moscow first had reports of epidemic starvation in Ukraine by early 1933; some relief in the form of food was sent south to the affected areas, but the distribution was disorganised and subject to Stalin's dictates, so those deemed enemies would receive no aid. Even at the height of the crisis, the government exported nearly 2 million tons of grain, which would have fed millions of hungry Soviet citizens. The famine decimated entire villages: by the summer of

1933, an estimated 24,000 people were dying of starvation every single day. The future Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev remembered that in his small Ukrainian village, "Nearly half of the population starved to death, including my father's brother and two sisters." Survival was now a daily struggle. Livestock was the first edible item to disappear: those animals who survived being eaten themselves starved to death, as their owners could not feed them. Some farmers tossed the carcasses into pits for burial but were inevitably interrupted by neighbours. "I still remember people screaming by one burial pit," recalled one eyewitness who had experienced the horror of the Holodomor firsthand. "Driven to madness by hunger, they were ripping the meat of the dead animals. The stronger ones were getting bigger pieces." When the livestock disappeared people ate their pets. The desperate chased dogs and cats, killing and cooking them. Some starving farmers, worn out and unable to continue the chase, simply collapsed from exhaustion and died in the streets and fields. "People were lying everywhere as dead flies," said one villager. "The stench was awful." The horrific sight became commonplace. "The dogs ate the ones that were not buried," said one villager. But soon all of the dogs had vanished. "Finally, we couldn't hear them barking anymore," recalled a resident of Uspenska, "as they had been eaten up."

The Holodomor monument Bitter Memory of Childhood in Kiev

Next the fish and frogs in the rivers disappeared, then the birds. People ate leather shoes, worms, flowers and the bark and blossoms off trees. "We tried to survive the best we could," said one Ukrainian. "We collected grass, goose-foot and rotten potatoes, and made pancakes or soups from putrid beans or nettles."

Hungry families secretly bartered furniture, clothing and gold teeth for handfuls of grain, risking arrest in an effort to stave off death. But the deaths continued. The brigades swept through villages, loading carts with the corpses of those who had perished in the streets. They were also known to grab the emaciated, throwing them in with the bodies and tossing them, still alive, into common graves.

People drank water to fill their empty stomachs: they shambled along in near skeletal form, bellies bloated in agony, until they fell. Death was everywhere, Galina Gubenko, a young village girl from the Poltava region, remembered. "People died at work; it was of no concern whether your body was swollen, whether you could work, whether you have eaten, whether you could - you had to go and work. Otherwise you were the enemy of the people." She recalled country roads strewn with the bodies of the dead, who had scoured the fields in search of the smallest morsel of grain. Some had died of hunger in their quest; others had fallen victim to the military patrols, who "hunted them down, collected everything, trampled down the gathered grain, and beat the people".

When the animals disappeared, people began to eat their dead friends and relatives. Hollow-eyed groups of peasants tore away at the pitiful mass graves, ripping arms and legs from the gaunt corpses and retching as they consumed the rotting flesh. Many others turned to cannibalism. Families with several children would select the youngest and weakest to devour. "One of our neighbours," recalled Olexandra Rafalska, "came home to find that her husband, suffering from severe starvation, had eaten their own baby, a daughter. The woman went crazy."

Sergei Lozovi remembered that his neighbours "cut off their children's heads and salted them away for meat". People "smelled meat frying in the smoke coming from the chimney and, noticing the absence of the children, entered the house. When they asked about the children, the parents began to weep and told the whole story." Even worse, the parents explained that they planned to quickly have more children so that they could eat them, or else "they would die in great pain and it would be the end of the family".

The practice of parents killing and consuming their sons and daughters became so prevalent that the Soviet Government actually distributed posters proclaiming, "It is a barbaric act to eat your own children." At least 2,500 people were convicted of cannibalism between 1933-1934, though the actual numbers driven to engage in this horrific act were undoubtedly higher.

The harvest slowly began returning to normal by 1935, but recovery would not be complete until after the end of World War II. When reports of the tragedy first reached Europe and America, Soviet officials derided them as capitalist propaganda and even refused the aid that was offered. Some enterprising journalists and officials did their best to spread word of what was happening, but few took notice. Others, like the notorious Stalinist apologist and Soviet sympathiser, Pulitzer Prize-winning Anglo-American reporter Walter Duranty of the *New York Times*, assured readers that stories of widespread famine were fabrications: Stalin's Soviet Union, Duranty insisted, was a workers' paradise. The *New York Times* would later write that his reports were "some of the worst reporting to appear in this newspaper".

The denials continue to this day. The Holodomor remains a thorn in the side of modern Russia. Until the advent of glasnost (a policy of

"IT HAD BEGUN AS A NATURAL DISASTER: STALIN'S POLICIES CARRIED IT INTO THE REALM OF MAN-MADE CATASTROPHE"

REMEMBERING THE HOLODOMOR

As debate over the causes of the Holodomor continues, the victims of the tragedy have not been forgotten

The first public memorial to the victims of the Holodomor was erected in Edmonton in Alberta, Canada, in 1983; since then a number of other countries have established monuments marking the tragedy, which is officially commemorated on the fourth Saturday of November. The largest can be found in Kiev, where the Museum Memorial to Holodomor Victims opened on the banks of the Dnieper River in 2008.

In addition to exhibits and artifacts telling the story of the famine, the complex includes a subterranean Hall of Memory, approached along a walk flanked by two statues of weeping angels. Twenty-four Stones of Destiny form a circle of remembrance, representing life and the fact that, during the worst of the crisis, up to 24,000 Ukrainians perished every 24 hours.

Perhaps the most poignant of the memorials is a statue, Bitter Memory of Childhood: her hands clutch sheaves of wheat, face gaunt, as her hollow eyes gaze out in perpetual mourning for the millions of children who perished in the famine.

openness and transparency), the subject, like so much in Soviet history, was forbidden. In the revisionist swing that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russian studies of the famine began revealing the full horror of what had happened and squarely placed the blame on Stalin and his totalitarian state. But the pendulum has once again swung back. In recognising the undeniable tragedy, Vladimir Putin's Russia has consistently pushed back against the idea that it was in any way genocidal.

In 2008, the Russian State Duma denounced Stalin's general famine policies of 1932–33 as "disregarding the lives of people in the pursuit of economic and political goals", yet insisted "there exists no historical evidence that the famine was organised against any ethnic group". This has become the modern Russian line: the Holodomor was a common tragedy shared by all Soviet people; exacerbated by Stalin's policies, but not the result of a concerted effort against the Ukrainian people.

The famine, coupled with Stalin's policies against Ukraine, decimated a generation. The death toll was staggering, but it will never be known precisely how many fell victim to starvation. The Soviet Government kept diligent records but these were selective and often failed to include those who died by being sent into exile to starve and those who succumbed to the typhoid and typhus epidemics that ravaged the stricken countryside. Some estimates of the death toll reach 20 million, though this number lacks statistical support.

More commonly accepted figures rendered the collective death toll at between 7 to 10 million people. In 2010, the Ukrainian Court of Appeals declared that approximately 10 million people had perished in these years of immense suffering. It also stated that 3.9 million had starved to death; of this number, a staggering 2 million starved to death in just three months from May to July 1933. The other deaths occurred from widespread illness exacerbated by the famine, by executions, and by enforced exile. The effects of malnutrition and rampant disease lingered, further decimating Ukraine. Some measure of these terrible statistics comes from the life expectancy figures: on average, girls born in 1933 lived to just ten years of age, while life expectancy for boys was a mere seven years.

The famine had begun as a natural disaster: Stalin's policies carried it into the realm of man-made catastrophe. Historians might continue to argue about the causes and the responsibility, but there can be little doubt that Stalin's anti-Ukrainian dictates not only accelerated the tragedy but also dramatically increased the final death toll. The famine gave him an excuse to make war on the Ukrainians under the guise of protecting the Soviet state and advancing the proletariat cause. The raw statistics are telling: of those who perished in the famine, fully 81 per cent were ethnic Ukrainians, while just over four per cent were Russians.

Any form of nationalism was brutally stamped out, as it threatened the USSR's dominance over the component states. The Ukrainian cultural elite was virtually erased; villages were destroyed and the Ukrainian language was suppressed – and all to appease Stalin's paranoia and quest for complete control.

Propaganda poster: "Grain to the State!"

POL POT'S
KHMER ROUGE

How a quiet, withdrawn, underachiever became responsible for one of the most devastating genocides of the 20th century

WRITTEN BY FRANCES WHITE

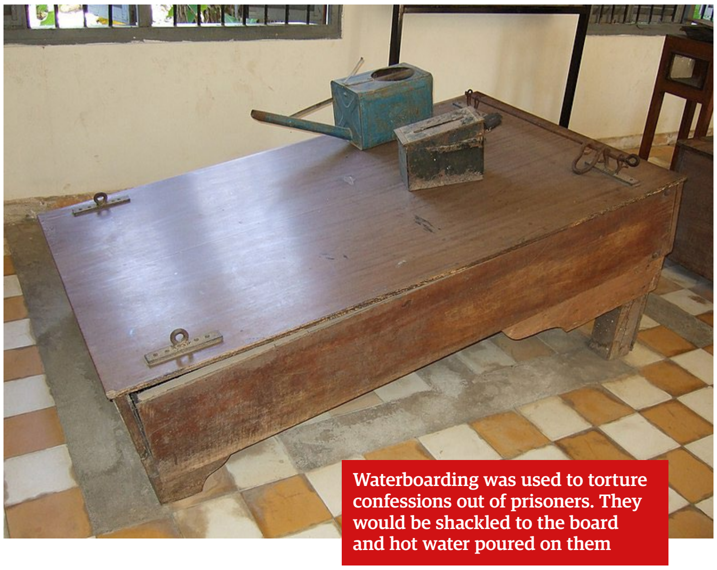
A quiet man. A reclusive man. A man who hid behind a thousand different names - Pouk, Hay, Pol, 87, Grand-Uncle, Elder Brother, First Brother, 99, Phem. To this day Pol Pot remains something of an enigma. In a world of dictators with larger-than-life personalities, Pol Pot lingers in the shadow. However, as difficult as the man himself may be to pin down, his actions speak loudly. They speak of cruelty, of stubbornness, of hatred and of death.

Pol Pot was born as Saloth Sar on 19 May 1925 in the small village of Prek Sbauv, approximately 100 miles north of the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh. His family was reasonably wealthy, with his father owning 50 acres of rice paddy. This was ten times the national average, and their house was the largest in the village, employing several poorer neighbours to work for them. Pol Pot's mother was a pious Buddhist and he was the eighth of nine children, three of which died young. When Pol Pot was only six years old, he moved to Phnom Penh to live with relatives. While there he spent a year as a novice monk in a Buddhist monastery. After this he then attended a French Catholic primary school. He was not a naturally gifted student and was held back several years. However, Pol Pot frequently rubbed shoulders with the elite during his years in education, as his cousin Meak was a consort of the king.

Thanks to his privileged position and his own determination and perseverance, Pol Pot secured a scholarship to study radio technology abroad in France. While there he became an active member of many communist groups, however he confessed to finding Karl Marx's texts difficult, and instead focused on the writings of Joseph Stalin and Chairman Mao. He became wrapped up in his revolutionary activities and neglected his studies, causing him to fail his exams and return to Cambodia in 1953.

When Pol Pot returned, the country was going through a period of dramatic change. Cambodia was revolting against French colonial rule; by the end of the year the region had gained its independence. It created the perfect climate for an ambitious young man to rise to the top and grasp control. Pol Pot joined the Khmer People's Revolutionary Party (KPRP), an early communist group formed in 1951. However, this was still an underground, covert movement, as communist activities were being weeded out by the authorities. Police began to suspect Pol Pot's communist leanings, and he and other party leaders escaped with a group of Viet Cong deep into the Northern Cambodian countryside. During this time, he adopted the revolutionary pseudonym he would make history as: Pol Pot.

The failed student began to rapidly rise through the ranks to emerge as the Cambodian party chief,



Waterboarding was used to torture confessions out of prisoners. They would be shackled to the board and hot water poured on them

The subject of *The Killing Fields* film, Dith Pran, is reunited with his family

and he was determined to lead a revolution. Pol Pot and his guerrilla army, known as the Khmer Rouge, began their uprising in 1968. It was not a sudden and powerful uprising, but Pol Pot was able to set up guerilla bases in remote, less populated areas of the country and slowly gain more control. In 1970 the hereditary leader, Prince Sihanouk, was overthrown in a military coup led by General Lon Nol while he was out of the country. In the civil war that followed, the prince allied himself with Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge and Lon Nol received the support of the USA. It was a brutal and bloody war, with the government employing scorched earth tactics, aerially bombing suspected rebel areas. Government soldiers would reportedly be rewarded for each severed head they produced, prompting many to target civilians and even children. This brutality actually helped the rebels cause, with many villagers rushing to join them. The USA ordered a huge bombing campaign of the region, dropping over 500,000 bombs on Cambodia, three times more than dropped on Japan in World War Two. However, it didn't work. By the end of the bombing the Khmer Rouge controlled three quarters of Cambodia's territory.

In late 1973 Pol Pot turned his gaze towards the capital. He decided to put the city under siege, preventing any outside sources of supplies from entering. Anyone who rose up against the Khmer Rouge was tortured and any revolts were quickly silenced. Pol Pot also ordered mass evacuations of urban areas to the countryside on an epic crusade against capitalism. He put together a 'death list' of enemies to be purged after he had seized control, which was read out at a press event, and featured all senior government leaders. The government, sensing the end was near, formed a new Supreme National Council with the aim of surrendering. Pol Pot reacted to this by adding the names of all the members to his death list. On 17 April 1975, the government collapsed, and Pol Pot took power. The worst was yet to come.

Pol Pot dubbed himself 'Brother Number One' as de facto leader of the country. Cambodia's name was changed to Democratic Kampuchea. The prince was initially supportive, returning to the country as a figurehead, but within a year the relationship soured and he was placed under house arrest. The new regime prioritised agriculture as the means to building a strong nation and a self-sufficient state, separated from any foreign influence. Pol Pot reset the calendar to 'Year Zero' and immediately called for the

THE RULES OF CONCENTRATION CAMP S-21

1 You must answer accordingly to my question. Don't turn them away.

2 Don't try to hide the facts by making pretexts this and that, you are strictly prohibited to contest me.

3 Don't be a fool for you are a chap who dare to thwart the revolution.

4 You must immediately answer my questions without wasting time to reflect.

5 Don't tell me either about your immoralities or the essence of the revolution.

6 While getting lashes or electrification you must not cry at all.

7 Do nothing, sit still and wait for my orders. If there is no order, keep quiet. When I ask you to do something, you must do it right away without protesting.

8 Don't make pretext about Kampuchea Krom in order to hide your secret or traitor.

9 If you don't follow all the above rules, you shall get many lashes of electric wire.

10 If you disobey any point of my regulations you shall get either ten lashes or five shocks of electric discharge.

THE KILLING FIELDS

As with most genocides throughout history, there are those who have tried to deny the Cambodian Genocide ever happened, with some prominent figures stating that artifacts were faked. This denial is now prohibited by Cambodian law. However, it is very difficult to comprehend this denial when faced with the evidence unearthed in Cambodia, most notably the Killing Fields.

These grave sites are the places where more than a million Cambodians were killed and buried. Spread across the country, these sites have helped to give historians an idea of just how many people were executed during the genocide, though the number is still impossible to know for certain, with considerable disparity in the figures: UNICEF estimating 3 million and other experts estimating 1.4 million.

The term 'Killing Fields' was coined by Cambodian journalist Dith Pran after he escaped the regime. It is a fitting name. Those who were accused of crimes would receive warnings from the government. If they received more than two warnings they would be sent for "re-education", which meant almost-certain death. People were encouraged to confess their pre-revolutionary lifestyles and crimes, including simply talking to foreigners. They were told they would be forgiven, but instead they were taken away for torture and execution. Those to be executed would be buried in the infamous mass graves, some were burned, buried alive, or killed via poison, spades or even sharpened bamboo sticks. Children were also murdered to prevent them taking revenge on the regime when they grew up. Those carrying out the executions were usually from poor peasant families. Today a memorial park has been built around the mass graves of the victims. Many of these graves have not yet been excavated, and after heavy rainfall clothing, bones and even teeth are known to surface.

evacuation of the capital. Citizens were scared into leaving, after being told that the USA were going to bomb the cities. The scale of this mass evacuation was massive, and was dubbed a 'death march' by Western media.

The population were reclassified as three groups - full-rights, candidates, and depositees (named because the group mainly comprised of those 'deposited' in the countryside from the cities.) The educated depositees, including civil servants, doctors, and teachers, were forced to work in the fields as part of their re-education process. These depositees were marked for destruction, with their rations reduced to two bowls of rice a day. These measly rations caused widespread starvation. They were also given no right to vote in elections, despite the fact that universal suffrage had been established in the new constitution. These people were seen as disposable, and the government did little to deny this, with their proverb blasted over the state-controlled radio: "To keep you is no benefit, to destroy you is no loss."

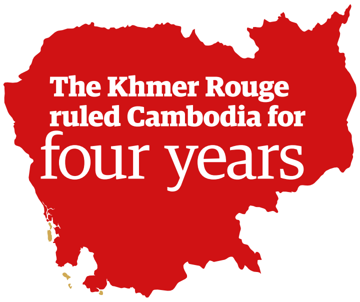
Pol Pot decided he only need a couple of million people to build his new world. Those who complained about their work or hoarded rations were tortured. Hundreds of thousands who were deemed unnecessary were ordered to dig their own graves before they were buried alive. Bullets, apparently, were too valuable to be wasted. These graves are known today as 'the Killing Fields'.

Religion was banned by Pol Pot's government, and state atheism enforced. Over 25,000 Buddhist monks were massacred by the Khmer Rouge, while all minority groups were forbidden to speak their native tongue or practice their customs. The groups targeted included, but was not limited to, Christians, Muslims, anyone who was educated, disabled people, Chinese and Vietnamese. Many of these groups were executed, or imprisoned and tortured in detention centres, such as the infamous S-21, of which there were only 12 known survivors.

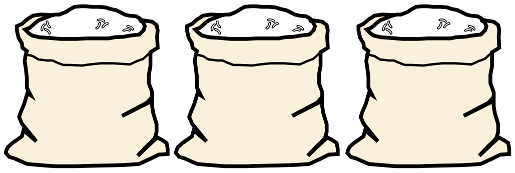
Children were raised on a communal basis and all property collectivised. Money, almost all books, jewellery, and religion were outlawed. Everyone was expected to follow strict rules regarding sexual relations, vocabulary and even clothing. Children were taken from their parents, who lost all rights over them, and forced into the military. Rice fields were even realigned to recreate the checkerboard design from the coat of arms on the flag. While the former affluent capital Phnom Penh turned into an abandoned ghost city, people in the countryside were slowly dying of starvation, or were taken away and never seen again. Any word against the government was a death sentence and because of the mass killings it is difficult, nigh on impossible, to estimate just how many people died as a result of the regime. Estimates have placed the death toll from 740,000 to 3 million, with approximately half of those deaths being a direct result of execution.

In December 1976 Pol Pot declared to his executives that Vietnam was an enemy. There had been hints of this before, in his allegiance with the People's Republic of China and adoption of an anti-Soviet line, as Vietnam was aligned with the Soviet Union. By 1977 relations between the two nations - Vietnam and Cambodia - worsened. Pol Pot knew this was not a war he wished to fight, so even sent a team in to negotiate. When that didn't work, he instead sent an army. It is quite possible he did this only to intimidate Vietnam into leaving Cambodia alone, but it actually had the opposite effect - spurring the Vietnamese to take action against Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge.

In 1976 Vietnam began launching air raids against Cambodia, and war between the two nations became inevitable. Cambodia boasted it would reclaim territory stolen from it in Vietnam. The raids conducted over the border caused widespread death and destruction in the villages. Cambodian socialists, sensing the changing of tides, rebelled in the Eastern Zone. Pol Pot responded by putting out a public call

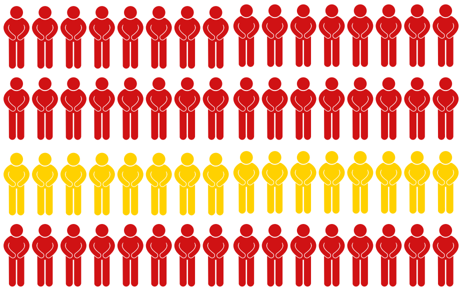


The Khmer Rouge ruled Cambodia for four years



3 tons of rice per hectare expected to be produced

25% of the population KILLED



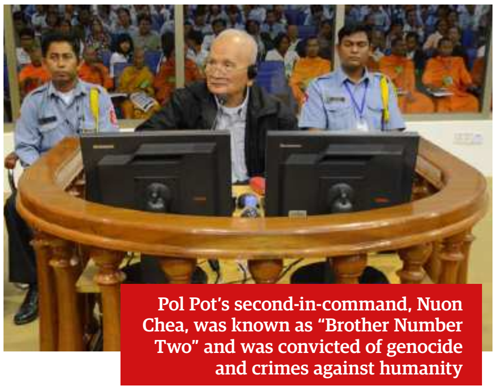
14,000 prisoners held at S-21

20,000+ mass grave sites found

Three Khmer Rouge senior leaders convicted for crimes against humanity

Please don't walk through the mass grave!

The mass graves are believed to contain approximately 1.5 million victims



Pol Pot's second-in-command, Nuon Chea, was known as "Brother Number Two" and was convicted of genocide and crimes against humanity

to "exterminate the 50 million Vietnamese" and "purify the masses" of Cambodia. 100,000 Easterners were slaughtered, suspecting of being sympathetic to the Vietnamese.

The Vietnamese had had enough. The threats against its people prompted Vietnam to attack Cambodia with the intent of overthrowing Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge. Vietnam sent more than 60,000 troops backed up by air and artillery units across the border. On 7 January 1979 they captured the capital of Phnom Penh, and Pol Pot fled into the jungle. Vietnam replaced him with a new government comprised of Khmer Rouge members who had escaped to Vietnam during the purges.

Pol Pot didn't count himself down and out. He quickly met up with his remaining supporters on the Thai border. Over time he managed to build up a new military force with the backing of The People's Republic of China. He continued his guerrilla operations, declaring all who rose against him as traitors and puppets of the Vietnamese. The Vietnamese were not pleased, and in December 1985 they launched an offensive against the Khmer Rouge, completely destroying the organisation's headquarters and base. Pol Pot fled to Thailand and officially resigned as party leader in 1985, stating asthma as his reason why. Despite this, he still served as the de-facto leader, "THE GOVERNMENT WERE DETERMINED TO MAKE PEACE WITH THE REMAINING KHMER ROUGE INDIVIDUALS"

but delegated his power to his successor, Son Sen. In 1986 he moved to China for treatment for an unspecified cancer.

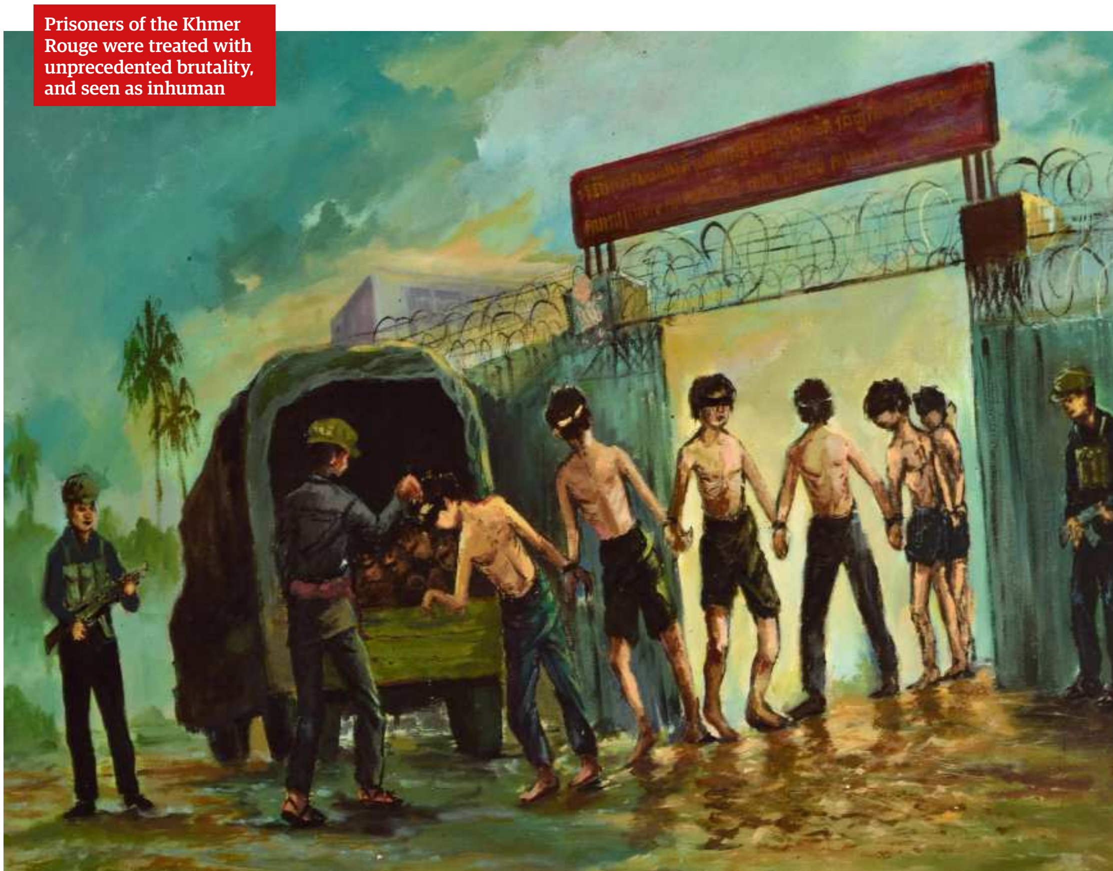
In 1989 Vietnam withdrew from Cambodia. Despite announcing his retirement, Pol Pot quickly leapt on this opportunity. He relocated back to Cambodia and fought against the new coalition government. However, by 1996 the Khmer Rouge were beginning to lose support, with several key leaders defecting from the party. The government were determined to make peace with the remaining Khmer Rouge individuals, but Pol Pot, despite suffering a stroke that paralysed the left side of his body, was not willing to bend. He even ordered the execution of his life-long right-hand man, Son Sen, after he had attempted to reach an agreement with the government. Not only was Son Sen killed, but also 11 members of his family. Pol Pot denied any involvement in this.

The former leader tried to flee his northern stronghold but was arrested on 19 June 1997 by the Khmer Rouge military chief. He was subjected to a show trial for his role in the death of Son Sen, and sentenced to house arrest for the remainder of his life. On 15 April 1998 it was announced that Pol Pot suffered heart failure while in bed and had passed away. His body was quickly cremated, despite government requests to inspect it. This led to suspicions that Pol Pot had taken an overdose to kill himself. It was believed he did so to prevent himself being handed over to the United States, which had been the original plan. Though the official line is that he died in his sleep, the suspicions of suicide still remain.

Unusually among communist dictators, while in power Pol Pot never became the figure of worship in a personality cult. He preferred to work largely in secret, much as he did during his years on the battlefield. In fact, it took two years of being in power for the party to reveal the existence of the Communist Party of Kampuchea, referring to itself only as Angkar or 'the organisation' up until that point. With this in mind, it does appear that Pol Pot carried out his actions due to genuine belief in their worth, rather than wishing to turn himself into a legend or God-like figure. However, biographer Philip Short wrote that he "delighted in appearing to be what he was not – a nameless face in the crowd" so this unusual factor may have actually been all part of his plan. His frequent use of pseudonyms hints at this, and he apparently once told a secretary: "The more often you change your name the better. It confuses the enemy." To this degree Pol Pot seems to have been not only reclusive, but also cunning. He was reported to be very charismatic, with a distinctive smile, and was regarded by his students as having a good nature. But Pol Pot had the benefits of a varied upbringing, giving him the ability of being able to communicate with people on all levels, and endearing himself quickly to them. He was a man that people naturally liked; he did not come across as ambitious and power-hungry despite obviously being so inclined. It is easy to see why many thought him a suitable person for leadership.

When asked about the mass killings that occurred under his rule, Pol Pot nearly broke down and cried, claiming that he must take responsibility as he didn't keep track of what was going on. He compared himself to a master in a house who was not aware the children were misbehaving, and that this oversight was due to his trusting nature. He claimed the resulting "mess" was the fault of those people that he had trusted to run aspects of the country, and that they would lie to him, telling him all was fine when it was not. Lastly, he blamed the cadres formed by the Vietnamese. In this statement, he put across the illusion of taking the blame, without actually taking any responsibility at all, presenting himself as a victim of unfair vilification. He also later stated that his conscience is clear, and he "came to carry out the struggle, not to kill people."

Only two Western reporters actually spoke with Pol Pot at any length, and much of his personal life and personality are still shrouded in mystery. He comes across as a mild, quiet person, and at times even a little slow, and yet it cannot be ignored that his legacy is one of death, destruction and torture. The Khmer Rouge was one of the most brutal regimes of the 20th century and Pol Pot was its leader, despite his reluctance to claim responsibility. The scars of Pol Pot's regime still remain for many Cambodians, physically and mentally. Although some senior members of the Khmer Rouge received life sentences for their crimes, villagers in Cambodia still live side by side with the men who killed their loved ones as part of the regime, and walk free without punishment.



Prisoners of the Khmer Rouge were treated with unprecedented brutality, and seen as inhuman

FIDEL CASTRO'S COMMUNIST CUBA

Fidel Castro's extraordinary self-confidence allowed him to overcome debacles that would have ruined other leaders, becoming Cuba's leader for half a century

WRITTEN BY PENNY WILSON

There was not much in Fidel Castro's early life to suggest that he would become the crucial figure in modern Cuban history. His background might have been wealthy, but his family were quite unconnected. His father, Ángel Castro y Argiz, had emigrated to Cuba from Spain in 1906, having fought as a conscript in the Spanish army in its last, unsuccessful attempt to retain colonial control of the island. But Ángel Castro made up with work what he lacked in contacts. His son later said that he had arrived in Cuba "and without a cent he started to work".

The greatest influence on the young Fidel, both personally and intellectually, were the Jesuit-run schools that educated him through his teens. These foundations, first in Santiago and then in Havana, were strict and rigorous but they inculcated in Castro great self-discipline, perseverance and determination. Although a good student, Castro put most of his energy into sport, pitching baseball for his school team as well as playing basketball.

It was his move to Havana University in 1945 that sparked Castro's interest in politics. He soon began to make a name for himself, campaigning (unsuccessfully) for the presidency of the student federation and, in November 1946, delivering a ringing denunciation of the corruption and incompetence of the government that made the front pages of the national newspapers.

Castro finished his studies in 1950, qualifying as a lawyer, and setting up a practice in one of Havana's grittiest slums. His professional profile grew steadily higher through his frequent appearances on local radio stations and contributions to Havana newspapers.

Castro was nominated as a Congressional candidate in the elections scheduled for 1952 and he threw himself into the campaign with everything he had, giving multiple speeches each day through the campaign as well as sending out thousands of leaflets. Castro's party, the Ortodoxo, was on track to win the election. But the election never happened.

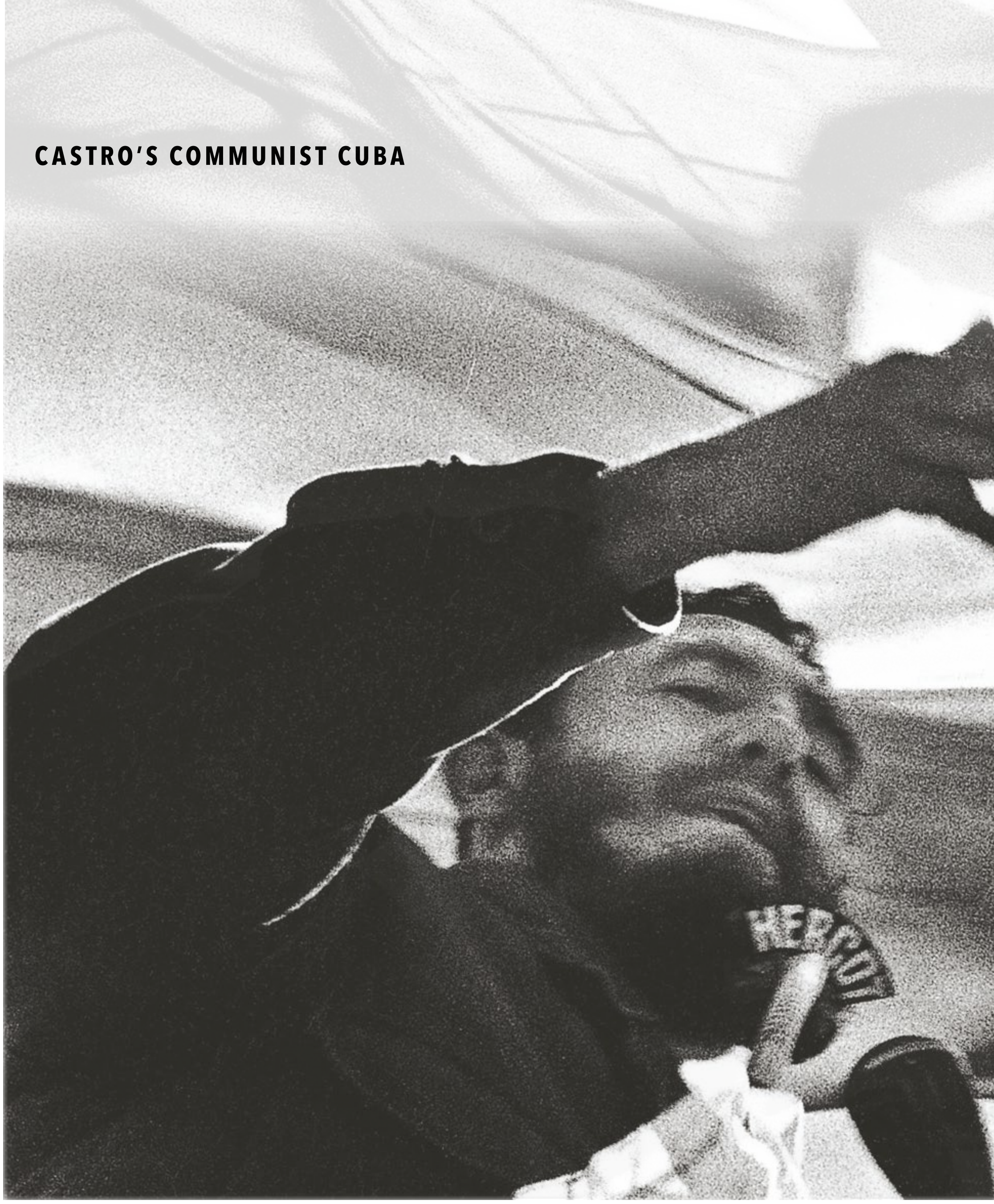
On 10 March 1952, General Fulgencio Batista led a military coup that stopped the planned elections and firmly installed himself as president. So the man who had led a revolution back in 1933 now brought his own revolution to an end.

Fidel Castro led several legal challenges against the Batista government, arguing that the general had breached the constitution and government ministers had broken laws. The cases were, unsurprisingly, thrown out by the Cuban courts. With that avenue closed, Castro definitively turned his back on peaceful action to bring about change. So far as he was concerned, the only way to bring down the Batista government was by giving it a taste of its own medicine – violent revolution.

He started organising a clandestine network and an underground press, recruiting members to his movement, which was exactly what he called it: El Movimiento, or 'The Movement' in Spanish. By July 1953, the Movement had about 1,200 members. From these, Castro selected 165 to take part in his next move: an attack on the main barracks outside the city of Santiago de Cuba in the province of Oriente. Castro hoped to kickstart the revolution with a heroic demonstration of revolutionary determination. But it all went horribly, comically wrong.

As a part of Castro's reworking of his personal history into the national mythology, the assault on the Moncada Barracks on 26 July 1953 became the first act of the Revolution. In reality, it was a quixotic expedition launched by a man manifestly unconcerned for the lives of his followers (or, to be fair, himself) so long as by their deaths they could make a suitably grand gesture against the country's oppressors. But perhaps the greatest of Castro's abilities was his extraordinary ability to survive: both the plots of assassins and his own political mistakes, mistakes that would have destroyed any man with less innate confidence. But Castro's attack on the government, when it came, was a complete fiasco. Stung into ruthless action, the army set out to hunt down and kill the rebels. Castro managed to hide out in the mountains for six days. As news of the army's brutality spread, the Archbishop of Santiago intervened to save other captured rebels, driving into the mountains to prevent their summary execution. Castro and the other surviving rebels were put in jail outside Santiago to await trial.

The trial of Fidel Castro and other surviving members of the group began on 21 September 1953. Having inveigled a special hearing just for himself, and with the eyes of the nation riveted upon the courtroom, Castro wrote the speech that he intended to give – not in his defence, as he knew that the court would find him guilty, but as his testimony to the wider Cuban public, finishing with a ringing claim that "La historia me absolverá" ("History will absolve me"). Coming at the end of a 240-minute harangue, the final sentence was what was remembered. The judges sentenced Castro to 15 years. He served two years



Castro possessed an unusual charisma, which convinced many to take up arms and follow him

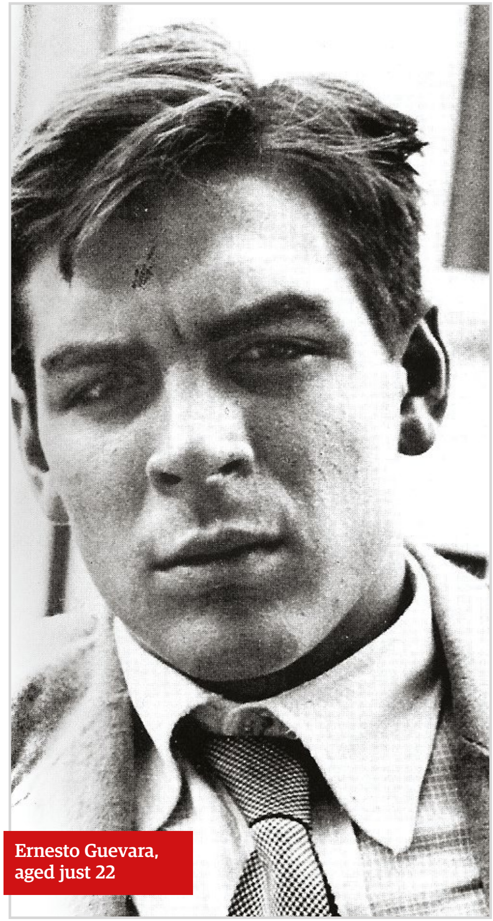
General Fulgencio Batista (left), riding with US Army chief of staff Malin Craig in 1938 during a parade

Cubans celebrating Batista's downfall

before being released and going into exile in Mexico, where he struck up a fateful friendship with an Argentinian doctor, the now iconic Ernesto 'Che' Guevara.

As the group of exiles began military training, Castro appointed Guevara his chief lieutenant. But tension was rising. In Cuba, three members of Batista's government had been murdered. Batista was putting increased pressure on the Mexican authorities to shut down the cabal of Cuban conspirators in their country. The Mexican police started to arrest Castro's people again. Castro ordered his men to make for Tuxpán, the port from which they were going to leave. But even as Castro gave the order, the Movement started falling apart around him. Two members disappeared for America, taking some of the stored weapons with them. Then a third man vanished. Castro began to fear that his organisation had been hopelessly compromised by the CIA. It was time to move. Castro pulled 'Che' Guevara from the safe house where he was hiding and set off for Tuxpán. Meanwhile, the chief of the Mexican police was receiving reports that exiled Cubans were arriving in large numbers in Tuxpán. But… mañana. It could wait.

Once again, Castro's luck held. He was going to have the chance to board his men aboard the good ship Granma. Only, when they saw the ship, they realised it wasn't a good ship at all, and certainly not fit to hold as many men as were there to board it. But Castro insisted, with his blind faith that truly moved people, that the ship would take everyone and that it would get them to Cuba. 82 men crammed on to the boat with their assorted weapons and, at 2am on 25 November 1956, the Granma set sail.



Ernesto Guevara, aged just 22

This venture pretty much sums up the so-called '26th of July Movement': a plan so ludicrous that only a madman would expect it to succeed. But Castro did. He genuinely believed that he was the man who would bring revolution to Cuba and he continued to believe that despite the manifest evidence to the contrary. This self-confidence was so overwhelming that Castro could convince other people to share it, putting aside the evidence of their memories for the vision he held out in front of them.

The invasion was as great a fiasco as the attack on the barracks. The Granma was supposed to land on 30 November 1956. Cuban-based cells of the 26th of July Movement launched an insurrection on that day, anticipating Castro's glorious arrival. But there was no sign of the ship. The leaking, overloaded hulk was still inching its way towards Cuba. When Castro had still not landed two days later, the local insurgents gave up their attacks.

The Granma finally landed on 2 December 1956. It was late and in the wrong place, and Batista's men were waiting for them. In the firefight, most of the 81 revolutionaries were

KILLING CASTRO

Marx's only son to live past babyhood, Musch's death at eight devastated his father

Sam Giacana, the Mafia boss recruited by the CIA to assassinate Castro

With a communist government just offshore, a series of American administrations sanctioned CIA attempts to assassinate Fidel Castro. Perhaps the most cold-blooded was the enlisting of Mafia bosses Sam Giancana, Johnny Roselli and Santo Trafficante to kill the Cuban leader. At the time, the Mafia bosses were all on the FBI's 10 Most Wanted list of criminals, so the CIA had to contact them clandestinely, using a go-between. Through its agent, the CIA offered the Mafia bosses $150,000 for Castro's removal. The two parties agreed to use poisoned pills, which the CIA's technical services division made, while Giancana recruited a Cuban official to administer the poison. However, the official was not able to get the poison into Castro's food, and nor were two other men recruited by the Mafia.

The CIA also considered killing Castro by spiking his cigars with botulinum toxin, blowing him up underwater by filling a brightly painted seashell with explosives and rigging it so that it would explode when Castro, who loved scuba diving, went to investigate the unusually bright sea shell. Continuing the underwater theme, another plan was to contaminate one of Castro's diving suits with fungus, thus infecting him with a skin disease. If they couldn't kill Castro, the CIA at least hoped to make him an object of ridicule. To that end, they planned to spray the radio studio from which he broadcast to Cuba with a hallucinogen so that the tripping Castro, high on an LSD-like drug, would make a fool of himself live on air. Last and (although there is considerable competition) least, was the plan to make Castro's beard fall out by soaking his shoes with thallium sulphate. According to Fabián Escalante, a Cuban counter-intelligence chief, there were 638 plots and schemes to kill Castro. In the end, Fidel Castro died on 25 November 2016. He was 90.

killed. But Castro, exhibiting his usual luck, escaped, along with his brother Raúl, Che Guevara and a few others. Of the 81 revolutionaries, only 18 had survived the landing. It was yet another fiasco for the communists.

But where other men would have started to question themselves after such a debacle, Castro's confidence was unshaken. Taking to the hills, the men set about trying to raise a guerrilla army. And in this, Castro received the unwitting help of the Batista government and his army. It turned out that they were even more incompetent than the revolutionaries. Over the next two years, Castro and Guevara led guerrilla attacks on Batista's increasingly demoralised forces, eventually bringing about the collapse of the regime. Batista fled into exile on 31 December 1958, taking around $300 million with him.

On 9 January 1959, Castro entered Havana and immediately set about appointing a new president and prime minister, reserving to himself the post of head of the armed forces – which now consisted of his rebel army. By February, Castro had appointed himself prime minister; by July he was the president too.

Castro had come to power veiled in the romantic history of Cuban nationalism and its series of revolutions. But the reality was different. Once in power, he began to quickly strengthen ties with the Soviet Union. In the Cold War climate of the 1950s and 60s, this did not go down well with the neighbouring superpower, the United States. Diplomatic ties between the two countries were cut off in January 1961. Determined to bring an end to a Communist government in what it saw as its own backyard, John F Kennedy's government sanctioned an invasion by Cuban exiles to bring down Castro's regime. The Bay of Pigs invasion in April 1961 proved as great a farce as Castro's own invasion five years earlier, but Castro's government proved more efficient than Batista's at hunting down the insurgents – none escaped capture.

Partly in response, Castro forged even closer links with the Soviet Union, which secretly began to install ballistic nuclear missiles on the island. When the United States found out about these missiles, the world entered crisis – nuclear crisis. The Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962 saw the world come close to nuclear war. The US navy laid Cuba under interdict, while Soviet vessels steamed closer, carrying new batches of warheads. After 13 days of brinkmanship, the Soviet leader, Nikita Khrushchev, backed down, agreeing to withdraw Soviet missiles from Cuba. The Americans gave an undertaking never to invade Cuba and also quietly withdrew nuclear missiles that they had stationed in Turkey.

Castro was furious at being abandoned by the Soviet Union, but he was a small fish in a large pond: there was nothing he could do about it. But if Castro could not exercise control outside Cuba, he set about ensuring complete control within the country, suppressing all political opposition.

Seeking to export revolution to other countries, Castro dispatched 'Che' Guevara as a roving revolutionary, conveniently removing a potential political rival from the country at the same time. Guevara first attempted to foment revolution in the Congo and, when that failed, he went to Bolivia, where the army eventually cornered Guevara, capturing and executing the revolutionary on 8 October 1967. His old friend now dead, Castro made 'Che' Guevara the face of the Cuban Revolution, his immortal image emblazoned on walls and posters; Cuban schoolchildren were required to promise to be like 'Che' at the start of each school day. Thus Castro avoided the personality cult attached to other 20th-century dictators: the image of Guevara was infinitely more malleable to his purposes and better looking too, as its presence as a poster on a myriad student bedrooms and T-shirts indicates.

While the Cuban government guaranteed employment to all Cubans, the country's economy depended upon subsidies from the Soviet Union in order to tie the knot of the state's

The Cuban army preparing to launch a counter-attack against Castro's insurgents

finances. All economic decisions were centralised, with Castro making the calls. Unfortunately, Castro was a lawyer, not an economist: as a result, Cuba's economy continued to languish. Castro himself lived apparently frugally. However, according to the testimony of one of his bodyguards who defected to the United States, this frugality was for public consumption: in private, Castro lived as lavish a lifestyle as the man he had overthrown, General Batista.

While Guevara had failed in his attempts to export revolution, Castro was willing to use the Cuban army abroad to help other revolutionary and anti-colonial movements to achieve their aims. In particular, Cuban troops took part in the Angolan civil war, and helped Ethiopia repel an invasion from Somalia. Amid the ongoing tensions of the Cold War, the Americans assumed that Cuba was acting as a Soviet proxy force, but documents released since the dissolution of the Soviet empire indicate that Castro was acting on his own behalf, as he sought to position himself as the head of the non-aligned bloc, those countries that sought to avoid enlisting on either side of the Cold War. In this, Castro largely succeeded, despite his obvious and close links with the Soviet Union.

CASTRO'S WOMEN

El Comandante's personal life was just as turbulent as his political one

A journalist once asked Castro how many children he had fathered. He answered that it wasn't a tribe - less than a dozen. While Castro was happy to be the face of the Cuban Revolution, he kept his personal affairs, and they were many, secret. A state secret. The Cuban media was forbidden to say anything about Castro's personal life. Castro's first wife, Mirta Diaz-Balart, produced one son, but the couple divorced after the imprisoned Fidel discovered that she had accepted a job in the Cuban government - in fact, he saw himself cuckolded by a state he hated. By his second wife, Dalia Soto del Valle, Castro had five sons. But there were many lovers during and between the marriages, and at least three of these liaisons produced children, perhaps most notably the affair with Natalia Revuelta Clews, who gave birth to Castro's only daughter, Alina Fernández.

Castro's only daughter, Alina Fernández, leads a protest against the Castro regime in Cuba

Of all Castro's children, Alina seems to be the one who took after her father: she too was a natural rebel. Even as a young girl, Alina said she wanted to leave Cuba. Castro, who took little interest in raising his children, dispatched her to France for a year. Alina returned a beautiful young woman and began working as a model. Then Castro saw a picture of Alina, dressed in a bikini, posing on a yacht in an advertisement for Havana Club rum. El Comandante was livid. He summoned Alina. Alina arrived and father and daughter proceeded to have the mother of all rows, Castro accusing her of lowering his name, Alina hitting back that at least now he was taking an interest in her life. Castro took even more interest when he learned, a few years later, that Alina was planning to defect. He gave orders that she not be allowed to leave Cuba but, on Christmas Eve 1993, Alina slipped out of the country wearing a wig and showing Spanish papers. In exile, Alina was one of Castro's most forthright critics, labelling her father a tyrant. A true rebel.

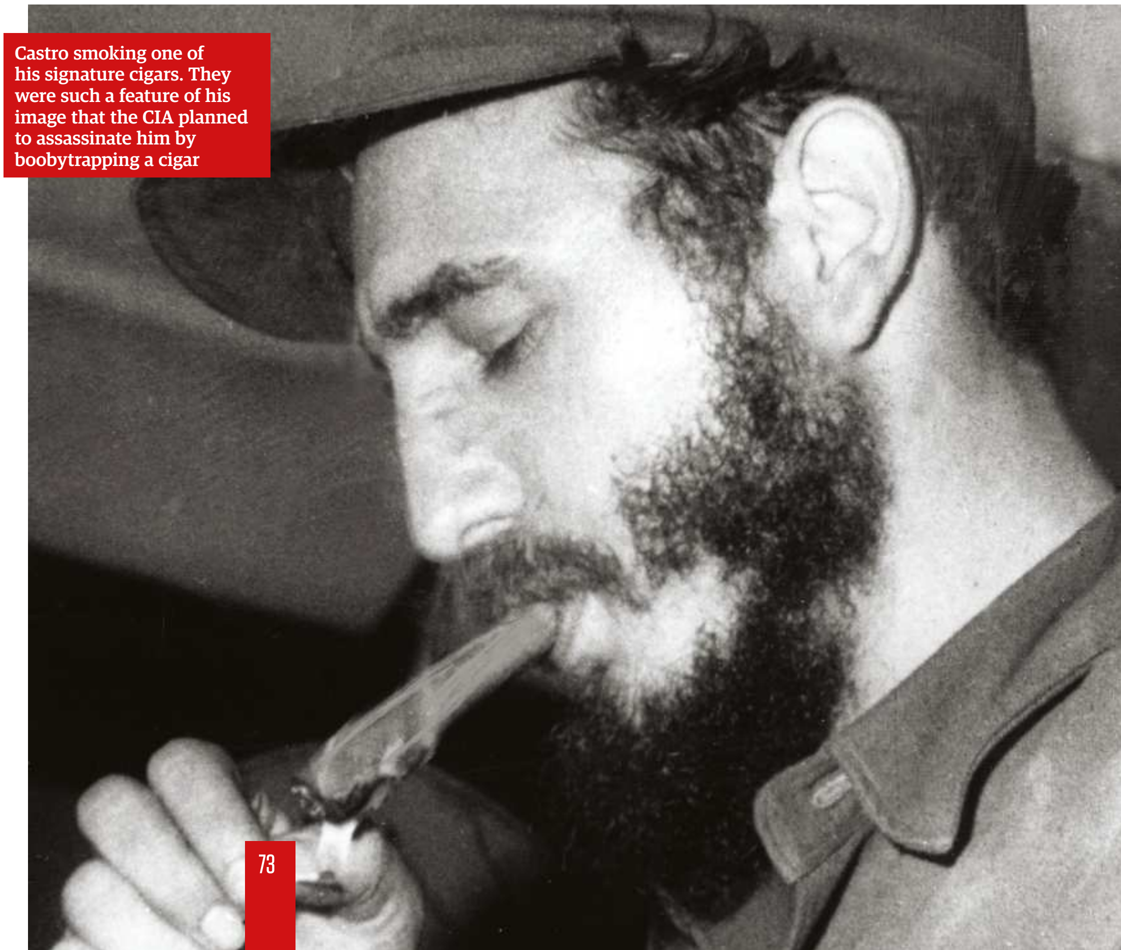
> "IF CASTRO COULD NOT EXERCISE CONTROL OUTSIDE CUBA, HE SET ABOUT ENSURING CONTROL WITHIN IT"

When Mikhail Gorbachev, the new Soviet leader, in the late 1980s began allowing a measure of freedom both within the Soviet Union and among its satellite countries, Castro maintained his old revolutionary, one-party, one-state line. So it came as a hideous shock to Castro and the Cuban government when the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991. The Cold War was over, with barely a shot fired. Castro was on the wrong side of history.

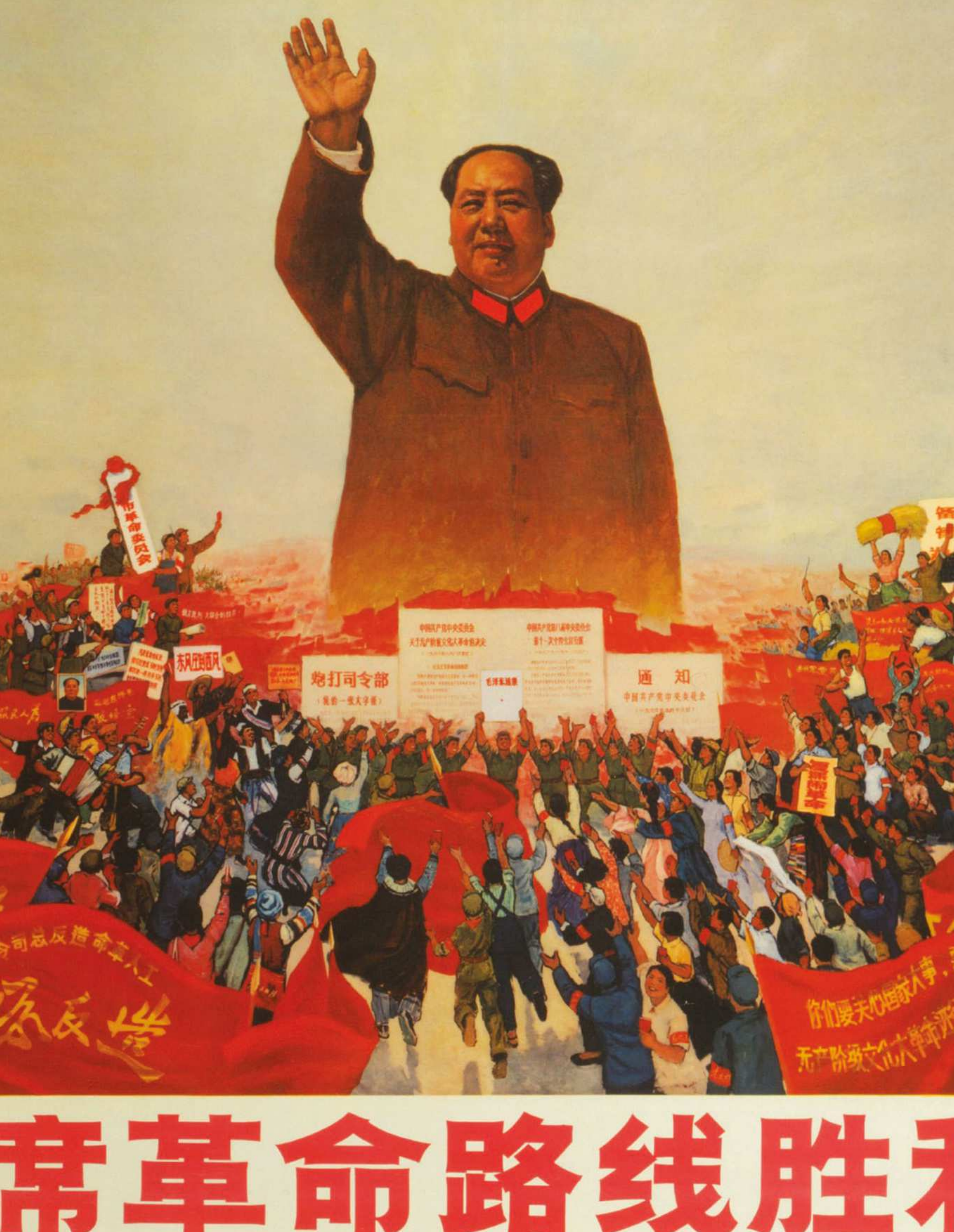
The sudden loss of Soviet subsidies plunged Cuba into an economic crisis. In response, Castro had little choice but to relax some of the rigid government controls on the economy, allowing some free enterprise while making sure that there was no political dissent. He also began to allow those Cubans who wanted to, to emigrate. But where the other Soviet client states saw revolution and the fall of governments, in Cuba, Castro remained firmly in charge. Indeed, Castro only temporarily relinquished power on 31 July 2006, when he installed his brother, Raúl, as president so that he could recover from surgery. Castro continued in poor health, however, and gave up the presidency permanently in 2008. On 19 April 2011, he stepped down as leader of the Communist Party, with Raúl taking up that role.

Fidel Castro died on 25 November 2016. The Cuban government did not give a cause of death. From 1959 to 2008, Castro had been the leader of his country. He had defied the United States, and stifled all dissent at home. He had avoided assassination hundreds of times, while fomenting war abroad. Fidel Castro proclaimed himself a communist to the end, but it is clear that what Castro really and truly believed in, above all else, was himself. Cuba, his country, had to go along with that unshakeable, unswerving self-belief.

Castro and Che Guevara have a laugh with a Soviet diplomat


Castro smoking one of his signature cigars. They were such a feature of his image that the CIA planned to assassinate him by boobytrapping a cigar

© Getty Images


市革命委员会
东风压倒西风
炮打司令部
（我的一张大字报）
中国共产党中央委员会
关于无产阶级文化大革命的决定
中国共产党第八届中央委员会
第十一次全体会议公报
毛泽东选集
通　知
中国共产党中央委员会
工人革命造反总司令
你们要关心国家大事，
无产阶级文化大革命
革命路线胜

MAO'S
DISASTER PLAN

China's disastrous bid to become the greatest country in the world

WRITTEN BY CHRIS FENTON

In 1940 China was in hell. The country was overrun with foreign invaders, the government was powerless and the workers fought among themselves for the scraps falling from the tables of petty warlords. How did the Celestial Kingdom come to this? The communists knew the answer – through the arrogance and pomposity of China's noble emperors. Communism had changed all that and chased away the foreign devils, pushed aside their rightist puppets and, by 1949, had established a peoples' China. The self-styled driving force behind this revolution was Mao Zedong, the chairman of the Chinese Communist Party and a man of the people. Rising from humble proletariat beginnings in Hunan province in rural China, Mao had grown up with revolution fervour in his veins. Having witnessed the destruction of Chinese power and heritage during the early 20th century, he had become a committed nationalist and later a communist, dedicating himself to the restoration of Chinese power through collective struggle. He had seen the Chinese peoples' spirit when properly motivated during the Communist Party's retreat into the mountains, which would later be dubbed the Long March, and the triumph of communist ideals after the destruction of the fascists led by Chiang Kai-Shek – his greatest rival. Now, under his leadership, China would be great again.

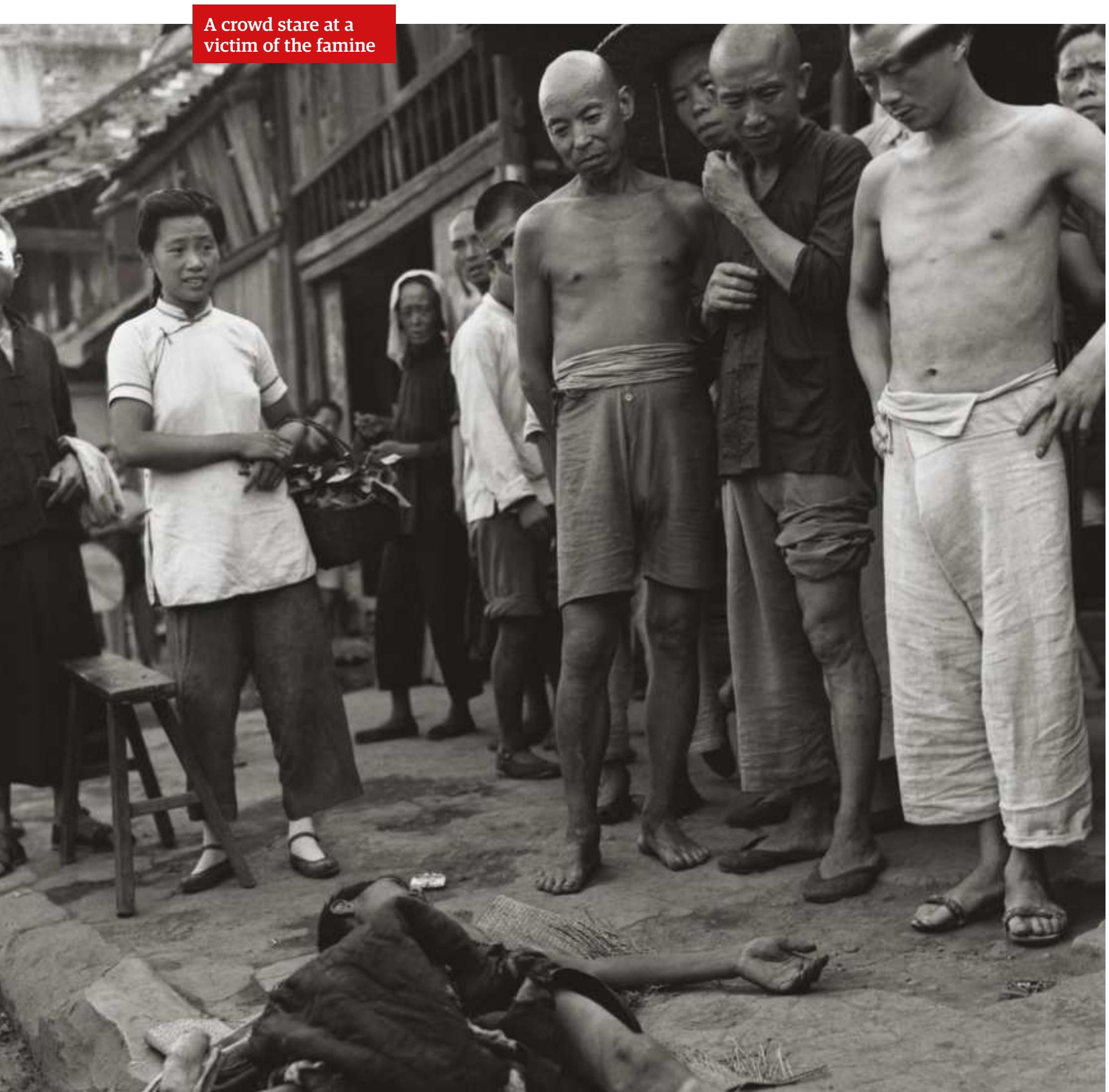
Mao's plan was to instigate a radical industrialisation of the Chinese countryside, creating mass communes to produce grain, rice and steel to turn the country into a superpower. The population was to be organised on a mass scale – this was no time to think small, the Chinese strength was in its population and the entire country had to work to make China great again. These reforms combined to form the Great Leap Forward. He ignored economists who argued for a gradual industrialisation process rather than a single quick bound and those who said that the post-feudal Chinese society couldn't handle so much change so quickly. Anyone who got in the way of his vision was against Mao and so against China. So, in May 1958, the Communist Party agreed to Mao's proposals. China braced itself for its Great Leap Forward out of hell into a workers' paradise. What followed was one of the worst humanitarian disasters in history.

Mobilisation and ideological conditioning of the Chinese people was absolutely key. Under Mao's plans, all private property and private action was banned. Every Chinese rural worker was forced into communes, thousands strong, to create a mass land army to produce grain that would pay for new equipment from abroad and lead to the production of steel. Under the commune system workers would sleep in dormitories, eat in huge communal kitchens

“MAO’S PLAN WAS TO INSTIGATE A RADICAL INDUSTRIALISATION OF THE CHINESE COUNTRYSIDE”

and work a ’48-hour working day, with six hours for rest’ as the *People’s Daily*, Mao’s propaganda newspaper, proudly proclaimed. There was not even room for traditional Chinese family roles in the new collectivist utopia - children were sent to mass crèches and women into the fields to work.

Party officials would ‘herd villagers in the fields to sleep and to work intolerable hours, forcing them to walk to distant additional projects.’ As villagers watched their homes get destroyed to make way for the mass communes, some wept. One villager cried: “Destroying my home is even worse than digging up my ancestor’s gravestone!” Mao was delighted and commented: “The notion of utopia mentioned by our predecessors will be realised and surpassed.” Initial results sent back to Beijing were more optimistic than Mao could possibly imagine. The harvest was so good that communist workers were encouraged to eat ‘five meals a day’ in the communal food halls. As one commune worker put it: “It was real communism… we got to eat things made from wheat flour every day and they were always slaughtering pigs for us. For a while it seemed that they were telling the truth and we were going to enter heaven.”


A crowd stare at a victim of the famine

Mao saw no need to wait for grain production to start rendering export capital and commanded steel production to start immediately. He instigated a cottage industry for the steel program - Chinese urban dwellers and rural workers were told to make steel in their backyards with primitive furnaces. Foreign visitors were impressed when they visited Beijing and saw the cityscape lit up with the contained fires of Mao’s mini steel plants in the back gardens of his comrades. As one commune member recalled: “The more metal you collected, the more revolutionary you were.”

Mao instructed grain harvesting to be switched to cash crops, such as cotton and for steel production to be given the highest priority. The figures for the 1958 harvest showed there was more than enough food to go around so, as far as Mao was concerned, China should continue to bound forward. In August, Mao raised the target for steel production from six to nine million tons. Provincial leaders spoke of unleashing ‘surprise attacks’ into the fields with ‘shock armies’ of mobilised labour to gather in cotton and begin collecting metal for steel production. War was also declared on flies, rats, mosquitoes and grain-eating sparrows. As the weather closed in and Chinese workers began to feel the grind of their 48-hour days, loudspeakers in every commune boomed out Party propaganda: “Our workers are strong, the people’s communes are good!” By now grain was being left out in the field as workers frantically scrambled through their communes trying to find raw material for their backyard steel plants.

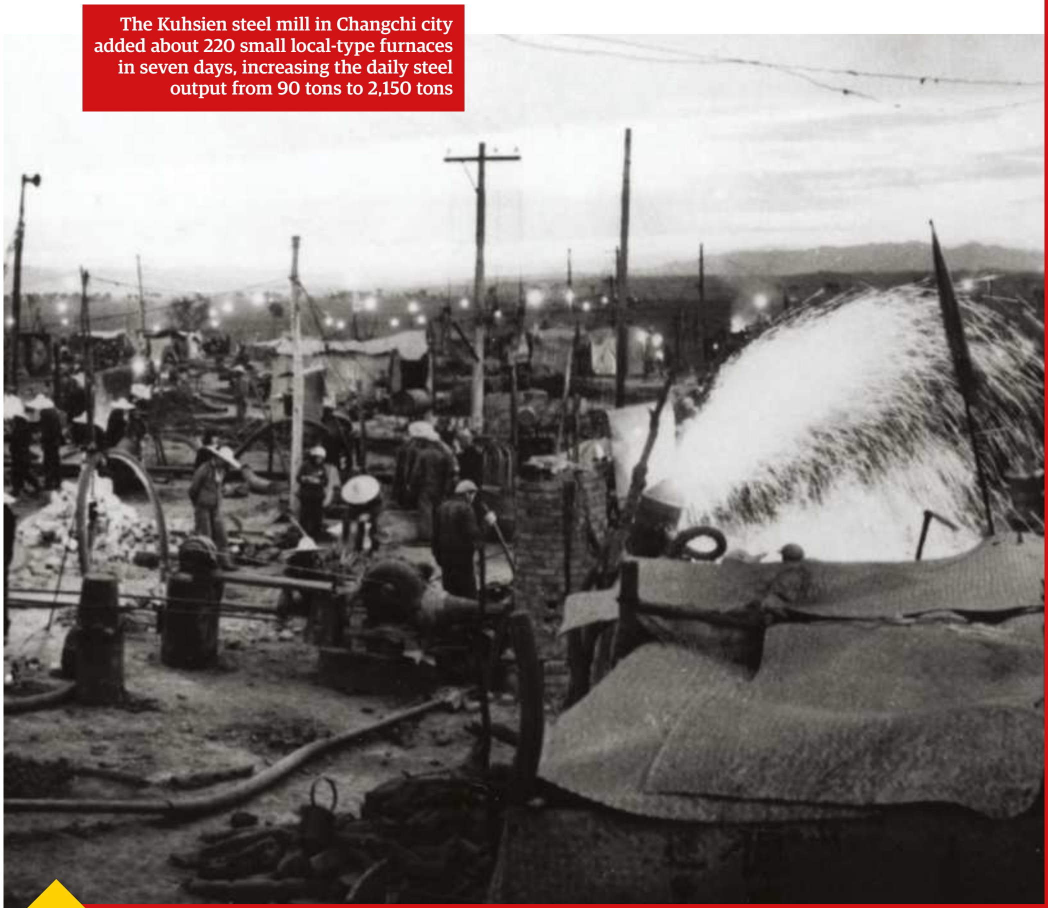
Party ideology was relentless and the eradication of sparrows became fanatical, but by killing the sparrows there were no longer any predators that could kill the insects that were now destroying crops. Other such contradictory policies emerged. Mao’s obsession with steel production meant there were no longer enough workers to bring in crops and they sat uncollected in fields, rotting away as food reserves diminished.

The ideological pressure worked so well that no one really knew China was marching headlong into a disaster until it was too late. The 1958 harvest was modestly successful, but no one wanted to tell Mao that it wasn’t a resounding success. A poor harvest followed but even so, the workers were encouraged to ‘fill their bellies until they burst’ and as a result the food supplies were quickly eaten through. Since the commune system had not envisaged transporting large amounts of food to other communes, food could not be transported to the areas that were now suffering from famine. In a Guangdong commune, a six-month supply of rice was eaten in 20 days and then the old and weak started to die of starvation.

The violent hysteria Maoism had created was now directed against the people, as starving Chinese workers began to weaken through malnutrition and the nightmare poverty of the commune system. Special 'criticism sessions' were established by Party officials within rural villages and miscreants who were not meeting the required working standards were paraded in front of the entire village, and Communist Party members forced other villagers to beat and humiliate the accused. The good harvests indicated by the official statistics meant that Mao continued to insist that steel was brought in to build his great utopia.

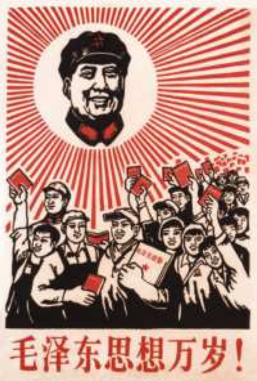
Thousands of rural peasants were forced through beatings and intimidation to abandon food production and concentrate on making steel from their furnaces, despite the hunger they were now experiencing. One communist inspector noted on the punishments: "Commune members too sick to work are deprived of food. It hastens their deaths." The persecution within the rural areas was terrible, but things were even worse in urban dwellings. Constant Party propaganda, mixed with the terrifying prospect of being selected for 'criticism', meant that urban dwellers had to toe the line and endure the endless working hours. Industrial accidents in factories were commonplace due to exhaustion and Soviet advisors teaching the industrial techniques left after abuse and molestation by Mao's officials, taking with them their expert knowledge. When asked about production figures, a typical response from one foreman was: "Day in, day out, they telephone for figures… who cares if they are true or false? Everyone is just going through the motions!" One man had his ears chopped off, was tied up with iron wire and branded with a white hot tool after he stole a potato from a communal plot near a factory. The worker's utopia had become a proletarian nightmare.

As the summer of 1958 turned into the harsh reality of early 1959, the supposedly glorious Great Leap had turned into a cold drop into the abyss. The decision to carry on regardless rested with the workers' paradise itself – China and its rotten communist system. There was no doubt in the mind of Mao that the Great Leap was working at the end of 1958, but this was because the system had created die-hard communist rhetoric and by 1959 that's all that Mao was hearing.

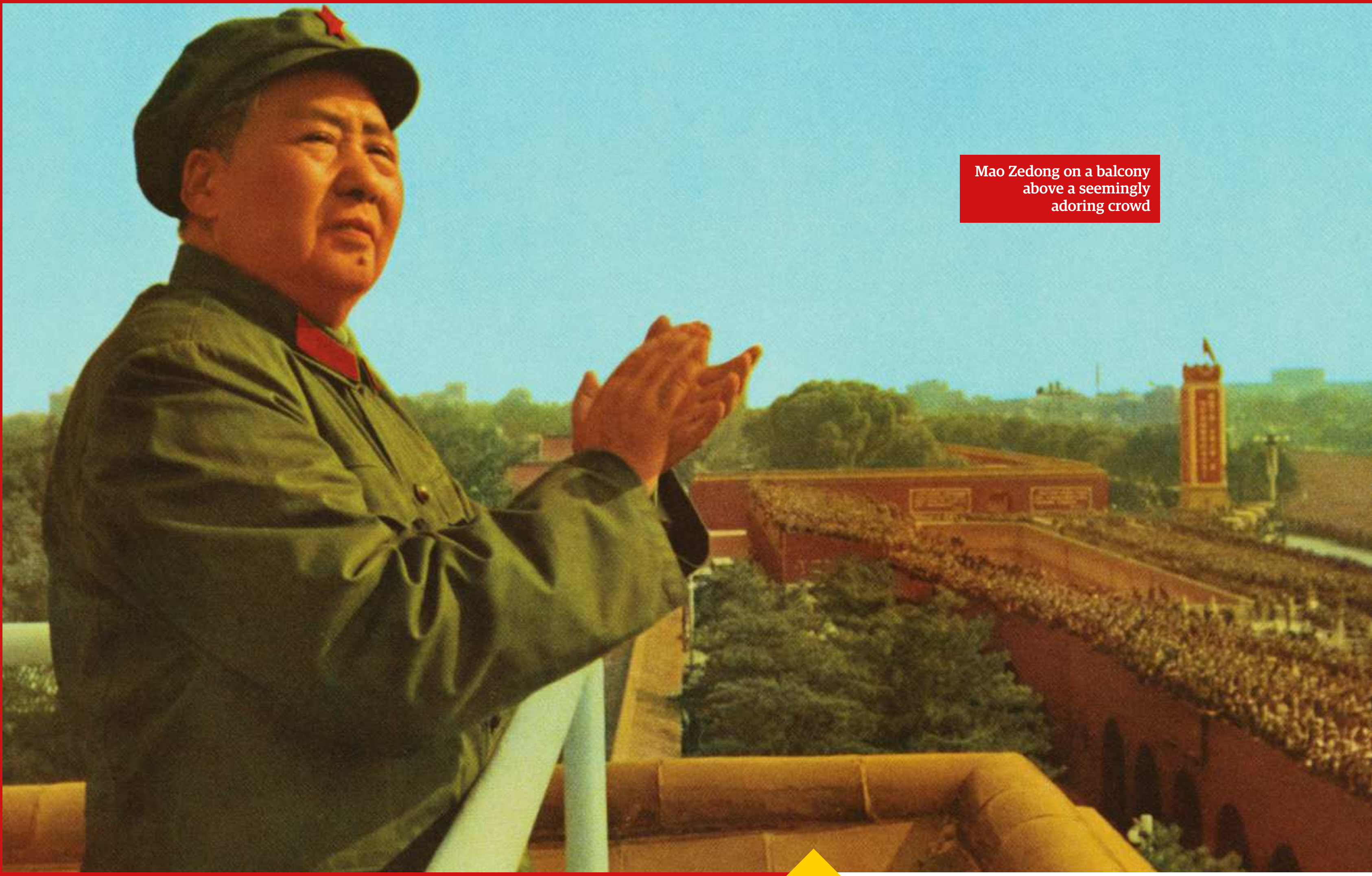


The Kuhsien steel mill in Changchi city added about 220 small local-type furnaces in seven days, increasing the daily steel output from 90 tons to 2,150 tons

THE LITTLE RED BOOK



Mao's little red book, more formally known as *Quotations from Chairman Mao Zedong*, details the deepest aspects of Mao's wisdom. It was first compiled during the Great Leap Forward by committed Maoist Lin Biao in 1960. While the original text is a tedious diatribe collecting over 400 selected quotes about the evils of capitalism and the need for continuous revolution against the bourgeoisie, its condensed version, the little red book, was used extensively during the Cultural Revolution by Maoists after the failure of the Great Leap Forward. The book preached non-violence to solve internal disputes and democracy among the instruments of the Communist Party, but also marked unity and a continuous form of revolution as key to a successful communist state. These contradictory lines resulted in violence among fanatical Maoist supporters and the supposed enemies of the state during the Cultural Revolution. Critics have argued that the book's publication was little more than an attempt to raise the profile of Mao after the failure of the Great Leap Forward even though Mao insisted it represented his inner thoughts about the subject of Marxism. Despite Mao's disapproval of profit-making enterprises in the book, he wasn't above claiming millions in royalties when it became a bestseller – only the Bible has more copies in circulation.



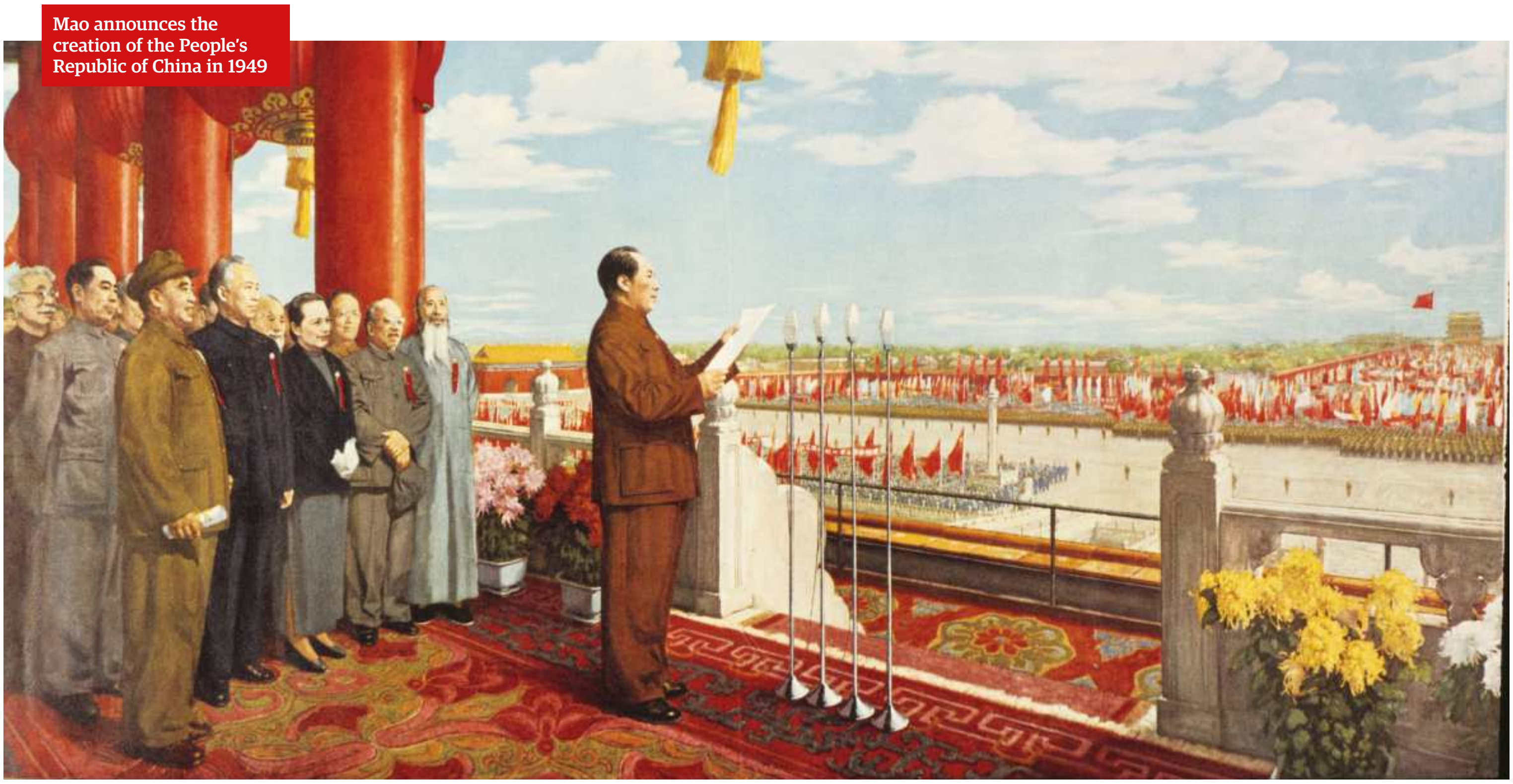
Mao Zedong on a balcony above a seemingly adoring crowd

“MAO’S IDEOLOGY HAD SHACKLED A GRIM EXISTENCE OF ABSOLUTE POVERTY TO THE PROVINCES AND HAD KILLED MILLIONS”

Part of the great Maoist vision was to enable communes to organise themselves - subject to strict Party controls - and give them centrally dictated grain and produce quotas that the provisional leaders had to meet. Of course, it would take a brave man, or a suicidal one, to return to the communist leadership anything other than glowing reports of fabulous harvests and content workers. Local leaders from Sichuan province were often compelled to revise their grain figures upwards if the original amount was felt to be not what the Party wanted to hear. Doctored photos were taken for the People’s Daily of children lying on tightly packed wheat six-feet high. It was a delusion, the people were starving, but the Party swallowed the lie and Mao insisted on bigger targets, which created a culture of deceit among the provinces. If one area had a high grain production, whether falsified or not, its neighbouring area would double their figures. Even the Mao-endorsed ‘make your own steel’ furnace was a fabrication. The high-quality steel Mao saw from the prototype was probably imported from one of the Soviet-model factories outside of Beijing.

This was Mao’s fantasy world and it was lethal. By the end of 1959, as the full force of the disaster unfolded, the time China would need to overtake Britain economically was slashed from 15 years to five and then down to two by the Party. One of the first test communes in Henan was named ‘Let us overtake England’. Its inhabitants starved after their farmers were sent to produce steel and their fields flooded due to poor irrigation control. Locusts ate what was left of their crops. Terrified provisional leaders carefully managed tours by Party leaders.

At the beginning of 1959, Marshal Peng Dehuai, a ranking People’s Liberation Army soldier who was deeply committed to the wellbeing of the peasant farmers, visited the communes and was appalled. He was convinced that the Leap had been an utter disaster. He talked to the emaciated peasants trying desperately to manufacture steel even though they were starving and asked: “Hasn’t any one of you given a thought to what you will eat next year if you don’t bring in the crops? You’re never going to be able to eat steel.” The response was typical: “True enough, but who would stand up against this wind [command]?” Even the usually-brave Peng thought better of saying anything to the Chairman himself. Then, in the summer of 1959 after seeing the latest fabricated figures from the communes, Peng could restrain himself no longer. He wrote Mao a letter describing the Great Leap as a ‘wind of exaggeration.’ Mao’s response was to throw a temper tantrum and in a speech to the Party he described Peng as a ‘bourgeois rightist’ who needed to strengthen his backbone. Peng was promptly forced out of Mao’s inner circle to live among the peasants in a run-down area of Beijing. The standard line from the Party was spoken by a Mao favourite, Shanghai leader Ke Qingshi: “We



Mao announces the creation of the People's Republic of China in 1949

should obey the Chairman to the extent of total abandon, in every respect – thinking, perspective, foresight and method – we are way behind [Mao]." There was only one man who could stop the Great Leap from bounding into greater destruction: Mao himself.

The beginning of 1960 brought with it grim statistics. Average available grain per head had dropped from 311 kilograms in 1958 to 191 in 1960. Mao's ideology had shackled a grim existence of absolute poverty to the provinces and coupled with the corrupt, sycophantic communist system, had killed millions. People were eating tree bark and gnawing the flesh off corpses lying unattended in Chinese streets; all from a country that was supposedly producing 596 million tons of grain a year. Mao was convinced it was everyone else's fault. He blamed the provincial officials for not following his reforms closely enough, then for following them too rigidly. He blamed the Party in 1959 when he sensed that the officials were starting to move away from him, which after the Leap's failure was becoming glaringly obvious. His rants became more drawn out, claiming the revolution was "under a combined attack from within and outside the Party." A new anti-fascist campaign was launched by Mao, which purged anyone who wasn't feeding him the lies he wanted to hear. In the end, he blamed communism itself. In a heated speech to the Party after reports that peasants were dying of exhaustion, he said: "If you don't follow me, I'll do it myself… even to the lengths of abandoning my Party membership and even to the extent of bringing a suit against Marx himself." The Great Leap was no longer about grain, communism or even China. It was about Mao and his unquenchable ambition.

As the months rolled by in 1960, and the population became weaker and weaker, Mao began to realise the country was in turmoil. The United States offered humanitarian aid and, in a final act of humiliation, so did Japan. They were all refused and Mao descended into a depressive stupor. The Party members became more vocal in their dissent but Mao used his traditional form of intimidation. He threatened to purge dissenters, even going so far as saying: "I will go into the countryside to lead the peasants to overthrow the government." The level of these misguided tantrums was only matched by the amount Mao was now out of touch with reality. The famine had crippled large parts of the country's infrastructure; the only official organ that was working was the Communist Party and its lackeys. Even if Mao's supporters were willing to follow him through another civil war, the population was no longer capable of fighting one.

Finally, in 1960, Mao approved some roll back on the unrealistic expectations of the Great Leap. He allowed the economic planner Chen Yun to cut back on steel production and concentrate on farming grain for the starving populace. The farcical quota system was made more attainable and thousands of industrialisation projects were cancelled. It was far too late. Over 30 million Chinese citizens lay dead, mostly due to starvation but a good portion due to the savage punishments imposed by Party officials. Some official Communist Party figures put the figure at 40 million dead. Mao's doctor had to order in more sleeping pills for the Great Leader.

By the end of 1960 China was in hell once again, however this new hell was called Maoism and it was digging China deeper into the depths of starvation and absolute poverty than it had ever gone before. Mao's ideology and propaganda had convinced the people to starve themselves by their own hands, it had forced the communist system to hasten their fates and had even deluded Mao himself. On Mao's birthday that year, the inner circle of the Party faithful dined on bird's nest soup, baby doves, shark's fin and the finest wine. The event was noted for the vast amounts of alcohol consumed, with at least one top-ranking official falling down drunk. Around the same time a Chinese peasant recalled the death around her due to the famine: "The people were numb, you just carried on as usual – no fear of death, no emotion for the living."

A prisoner is subjected to public criticism

MAO'S VISION

1948

May 1958
The Great Leap Forward begins. Millions of Chinese workers are inspired and motivated by Maoist communism, striving to shake off their feudal existence and become happy, productive state workers.

Harvest 1958
The harvest in 1958 is so bountiful and the commune system is working so well that Mao insists that workers eat five meals a day in the communal kitchens, fulfilling the ideal of the workers' paradise.

April 1959
The timetable for overtaking Britain is shrunk from 15 to two years. The workers are producing grain, cotton and steel in such large quantities that export capital is building huge industrial cities.

June 1959
Mao addresses the Luschan Party conference in triumph. He has stared down the capitalists in America and the class traitors in the Soviet Union that told him he couldn't make China a world power.

1960
China has become so powerful that the Western imperialists are forced to treat with Mao on his terms. American bases in Japan are forced to close and the Soviet Union now takes its lead from Beijing.

CHINA'S REALITY

1948

May 1958
The Great Leap Forward begins. Millions of Chinese workers are displaced and forced to relinquish all private property, leave their ancestral homes and begin grinding 48-hour working days.

Harvest 1958
The 1958 harvest succeeds, but the Party overestimates its success to please Mao. In reality there is not enough food in the country for the workers and reserves are depleted by the communal kitchens.

April 1959
Fifteen provinces are now suffering from drought and 25 million people need urgent food relief. There is no help forthcoming from the government as the Party had not planned for such an eventuality. The workers are suppressed.

June 1959
Mao is forced to fight for his position at the Lushan conference. Loud voices in the Party are now saying that the country is in chaos. As a final act of humiliation, China is offered food aid by America and Japan.

1960
With the country in chaos and over 30 million people dead, Mao's power within the Party weakens. He is forced to accept partial blame for the Great Leap and allows Party officials to roll back his plans.

A young Mao Zedong makes a speech to some of his followers

Mao visits farmers in 1958 to congratulate them on high yields

FAILURES

Communal eating

Maoist communism commanded the people to live side by side in communes and eat together in communal kitchens. When the Great Leap started, workers were encouraged to eat as much as they wanted in the communal kitchens. What followed was severe food shortages as the harvests could not support such demand for food and the communist system wasn't strong enough to provide food aid to all parts of the country. This led to famine.

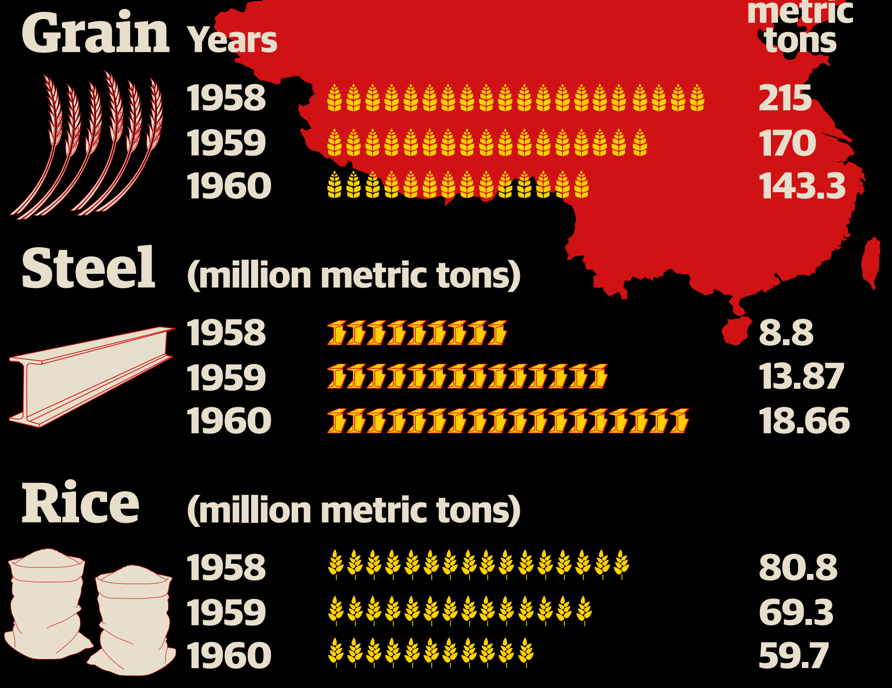
Steel furnaces

Mao's backyard steel industry was a disaster from the beginning, the prototype he saw probably did not produce the high-quality steel he was told it did. Feeding low-quality metal into the furnaces only served to create low-quality produce, meaning the workers were wasting their time. After millions of starving workers tried to produce steel rather than food, Mao was convinced to leave steel production to proper industrial facilities and skilled workers.

Irrigation

Thousands of starving peasants died creating ill-conceived and poorly planned irrigation projects throughout China. Mao knew the importance of irrigation to a country that had a vast amount of land and an unpredictable climate, but had expelled the Soviet engineers sent to help China establish such large projects. The irrigation projects that were built created droughts in some areas and flooding in others, as poorly trained Chinese agriculture engineers were ordered to set about irrigating Chinese fields without expert advice.

Production 1958-1961



Grain

Years	million metric tons
1958	215
1959	170
1960	143.3

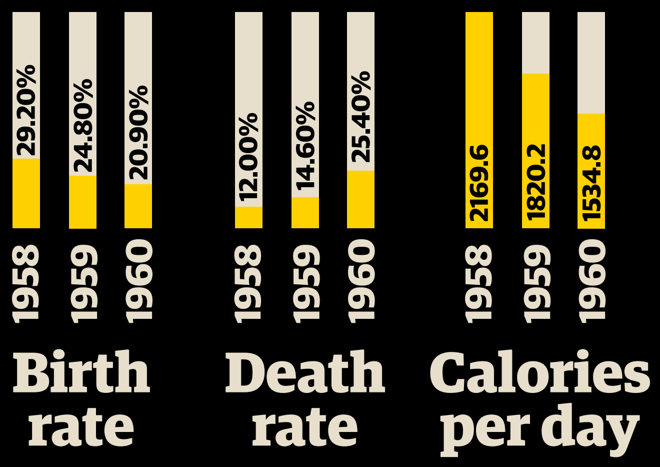
Steel (million metric tons)

1958	8.8
1959	13.87
1960	18.66

Rice (million metric tons)

1958	80.8
1959	69.3
1960	59.7

Population 1958-1961



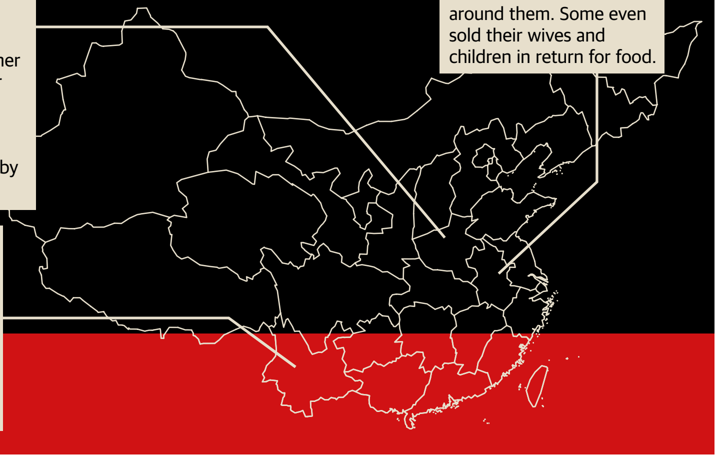
	Birth rate	Death rate	Calories per day
1958	29.20%	12.00%	2169.6
1959	24.80%	14.60%	1820.2
1960	20.90%	25.40%	1534.8

Overall figures

38,000,000
estimated deaths due to starvation

10,729,000
estimated deaths due to punishment/ internment

Specific events



Henan
Party militias fanned out across the country and brutalised the population to force them to work. According to one researcher in Daoxian county ten per cent of those who died during the Leap were "buried alive, clubbed to death or otherwise killed by Party members."

Yunnan
As a high-profile Mao supporter, the leader of Yunnan instructed his workers to work 'day and night' for two weeks to increase steel and rice production. Thousands died of exhaustion.

Anhui
In one of the worst affected areas by the famine, workers resorted to cannibalism as their fellow workers died around them. Some even sold their wives and children in return for food.

© Corbis; Alamy; Getty

THE COMMUNIST WHO DEFIED STALIN

JOSIP BROZ TITO

Meet the communist dictator who ruled behind the Iron Curtain but stood apart from the USSR

WRITTEN BY SCOTT REEVES

Josip Broz liked to do things differently. A communist dictator who carved out his own particular brand of socialism in Yugoslavia, Broz – or Tito, a name he adopted as an underground revolutionary – was regarded with a combination of uneasy suspicion and respect in both Washington, DC, and Moscow. He straddled the Cold War and held his diverse country together in a dangerous world.

Born on 7 May 1892 in a northern Croatian village, at that time part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Broz was the child of a Croat father and Slovene mother. His early years saw him travel widely in search of work, initially as a locksmith, then in automotive factories, including stints in Trieste, Zagreb, Munich and Vienna. As a result, Broz experienced poor working conditions throughout central Europe and took an interest in workers' affairs. He joined the Metal Workers' Union at the age of 18 and was an active participant in several May Day strikes.

Broz was summoned to compulsory military service in the Austro-Hungarian army in May 1913. He was quickly promoted to sergeant major but came close to not seeing any action in the First World War – when war broke out and his regiment marched to the Serbian border, Broz was arrested for sedition, perhaps for espousing his socialist views. He was eventually acquitted and sent to the Russian front in early 1915, serving for a few months before being captured in a Russian offensive near Bukovina.

Broz was still a prisoner of war in Russia when revolution broke out in 1917. When the camp he was in was left unguarded in the chaos, Broz walked free and sneaked aboard a goods train bound for Petrograd. Here he took part in the July Days workers' demonstrations and was arrested as a suspected Bolshevik by the Provisional Government. The Russians attempted to return him to a POW camp but Broz escaped aboard another train, heading for Siberia. Learning that Lenin had seized control of Petrograd, Broz volunteered for the International Red Guard and fought on the side of the Bolsheviks.

In autumn 1920, Broz returned to his homeland with a Siberian wife, although much had changed since he had left. With the Austro-Hungarian Empire now consigned to history, his birthplace was now part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, more commonly known as Yugoslavia. Broz joined the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, but the rapidly growing movement was outlawed following the 1921 assassination of the Minister of the Interior by a young communist. Being a member of the underground organisation made life hard for Broz – he was fired from jobs, arrested for a seditious speech at a comrade's funeral and forced to accept his home being searched regularly.

In 1925, Broz committed even further to the communist cause and became a professional revolutionary, finding work in a shipyard and a railway works with the intention of stirring up workers to strike against their employers and rebel against the government. He was sentenced to four months in prison for being a member of the banned Communist Party but skipped bail pending an appeal and went into hiding. When the police finally caught up with Broz again a year later he was sentenced to five years for the possession of explosives. After serving the full term he was rearrested at the prison gates and forced to serve the four months he had previously managed to evade.

Upon his eventual release in March 1934 Broz found that the world had again changed a great deal during his absence. The Wall Street Crash had sparked a worldwide economic depression, fascism was a growing force across Europe and Adolf Hitler had been appointed Chancellor of Germany. Although now a marked man, Broz was as determined as ever to serve the communist cause and continued to work for the still-illegal party. He used various pseudonyms to disguise his identity, but the one that stuck was Tito, a common nickname in his homeland.

Tito was appointed to the Yugoslav Politburo and despatched to the USSR to report the activities of Yugoslav communists, moving deftly in diplomatic circles and eventually rising to General Secretary of the Yugoslav Communist Party. Tito managed to survive Stalin's purges of foreign communists by avoiding what he called Stalin's "injustices".

The Second World War initially bypassed Yugoslavia, but Axis forces invaded the country on 6 April 1941. Yugoslavia's military forces quickly crumbled and King Peter II fled, but Tito rallied resistance under the communist banner and established partisan brigades to fight the invaders. They fought fiercely and were so successful in harassing the enemy that the Allies began to back Tito and send him supplies - even Peter II called upon all Yugoslavs to recognise Tito's leadership. Towards the end of 1945, the partisans - with some support from the Soviet Army - began to push the occupying Axis forces out of the country. Yugoslavia was liberated and Tito was hailed as the resistance hero who saved the country.

Tito was named Prime Minister in the provisional government, a position he retained when post-war elections saw a comprehensive victory for the Communist Party. The monarchy was abolished and Tito reformed the country as a socialist state with six constituent republics largely based on ethnic nationalities: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia. His partisan armies were moulded into the People's Army; the State Security Administration and Department of

People's Security were set up as his secret police. Former Nazis and collaborators were put on trial, but other political opponents came under attack too – notably Draža Mihailović, another wartime resistance hero who wanted to retain the monarchy.

Although Tito was regarded as the second most powerful communist leader in Europe after Stalin, he proved to be stubbornly independent of Moscow. Since he was so popular in his own country and had liberated Yugoslavia with little Soviet intervention, Tito felt able to countermand Stalin's policies and advice. He stood up to the US in territorial disputes on the Italian border – even shooting down several US aircraft – and openly backed communists in the Greek Civil War, despite Stalin's demands that the West should not be provoked. Tito also pursued economic policies that diverged from the Soviets in several areas. Mistrust between Moscow and Belgrade was apparent as early 1945, when Stalin set up a spy ring in Yugoslavia, but the official break came in 1948, when Yugoslavia was expelled from Cominform due to what were called its "nationalist elements".

Yugoslavia may have broken from Stalin and the USSR, but it did not completely escape archetypal communist paranoia. Between 1948 and 1956, Tito increased the repression of his opponents – not only by attacking anti-communists but also those who showed sympathy to the Soviet model. Prominent partisans who had saved the country during the war were executed. Tens of thousands of political prisoners were shipped to labour camps, many of whom died in the harsh conditions. Even Milovan Đjilas, a former Deputy Prime Minister and potential successor to Tito, was repeatedly arrested and imprisoned for criticising the Tito regime – although Đjilas was finally freed in 1966, when repressive measures eventually began to be relaxed a little.

In order to straddle the uncomfortable position that he found himself in – stuck between two competing superpowers in the Cold War and not fully trusted by either – Tito proposed a third way. His Non-Aligned Movement, which was established in 1961, included several countries that were not part of the capitalist West or communist East: Egypt, Ghana, India and Indonesia were the major international players alongside Tito's Yugoslavia.

Tito was able to successfully walk the non-aligned tightrope. Yugoslavia avoided military conflict throughout the Cold War period and non-aligned status allowed Tito to accept financial aid from both the West (via the Marshall Plan) and the East (via Comecon). Yugoslav businesses, which were owned by the state but collectively managed by the employees themselves, were also able to export to both sides. The constant threat of rampant unemployment was solved by easing visa restrictions in 1967, allowing young Yugoslavs to move to the west in search of work. By the 1970s, over 1 million Yugoslavs – which equated to around 20 per cent of the working age population – were employed abroad.

However, Tito's economic policies did not create a socialist utopia. The self-management system encouraged wage-price inflation and the slow rundown of capital, storing up problems for the future. Tito ran up foreign debts at an unsustainable level, meaning that further loans were required to pay the interest of existing ones, plunging the country deeper into an ever-growing financial abyss. The Yugoslav economy was creaking under the strain and a major crisis was inevitable – it was just a matter of when it would happen.

By the late 1970s, the aging Tito's health was also failing. He died in May 1980, three days short of his 88th birthday. His funeral drew leaders from across the world and from both sides of the Cold War divide. They mourned the loss of a dictator who had straddled the Iron Curtain and who had stood aside from the excesses of the Stalinist regime and the Soviet Union. His personal popularity, stemming from his role as liberator in the Second World War, held together a country that was an uneasy mix of several ethnic groups who were often at loggerheads.

Nevertheless, Tito's Yugoslavia was still a police state in which he wielded an iron fist against many political opponents and in which human rights were given scant regard. Ethnic nationalist movements surged after his death, further provoked by the economic crash that had been stored up under Tito finally being unleashed. The republics descended into political conflict and, ultimately, a series of violent wars that featured mass rape and genocide. The country that Tito had ruled for 35 years lasted for little more than a decade after his death.

CRIMINAL TO WAR HERO

Tito's rise to power tells a familiar communist tale

Although he was still a wanted revolutionary in 1941, Tito's response to the Axis invasion of Yugoslavia was swift. He formed a Military Committee within the Yugoslav Communist Party, was appointed Commander in Chief of the communist partisan resistance and issued a pamphlet calling on people to unite against the occupiers. However, the partisans soon clashed with a rival resistance movement, the chetniks, who favoured limited cooperation and collaboration with the Axis occupiers until an Allied landing could take place. Tito's partisans were initially poorly armed and could only gain new weaponry from the invaders, but their relentless guerrilla warfare slowly reclaimed chunks of Yugoslav territory. Unlike the chetniks, who recruited only Serbians, Tito was the leader of a multi-ethnic organisation and could draw on countrywide support.

Recognising the growing threat he posed, the Axis carried out seven different offensives to try to wipe out the partisans, but none succeeded in killing Tito. Once the Allies switched from backing the chetniks to the partisans an unstoppable momentum began to build. By the end of the war, the partisans numbered more than 800,000 and had pushed the Axis beyond the Yugoslav border. The former convict had liberated the country that imprisoned him.

SUN, SEA AND SOCIALISM

Tito welcomes Western wealth

Tito's visa reforms of the 1960s did not just give Yugoslavians an opportunity to live and work over the border; it also gave Westerners a chance to peek behind the Iron Curtain. Tito realised that tourism would create much-needed revenue and employment. Tourists from the West were lured by package holidays with low prices – Tito deliberately devalued the Yugoslav dinar to make his country cheap to visit – and a chance to see a communist society for themselves.

Purpose-built resorts were constructed along the Adriatic coast, including in Dubrovnik, Pula and Split. Planners even worked out the most efficient use of available space: one metre of beach per 1.66 tourists.

Yet these were more than fly-and-flop beach holidays. Yugoslavian operators encouraged holidaymakers to join excursions inland to visit cultural sites and, Tito hoped, help regenerate the local economy. Yugoslav cuisine introduced new tastes to the British palate for the first time. By the end of the 1980s, before civil war decimated the tourist industry, Yugoslavia was the second most popular overseas holiday destination for UK holidaymakers and Yugotours was the fourth largest travel agent. For a generation of Brits Tito's Yugoslavia was known for summer sun rather than socialism.

Tito's funeral was attended by more state delegations than any other prior to that of Pope John Paul II

THE HOUSE OF KIM

In over 70 years of existence, the reclusive North Korea has had only three leaders – all from the same family

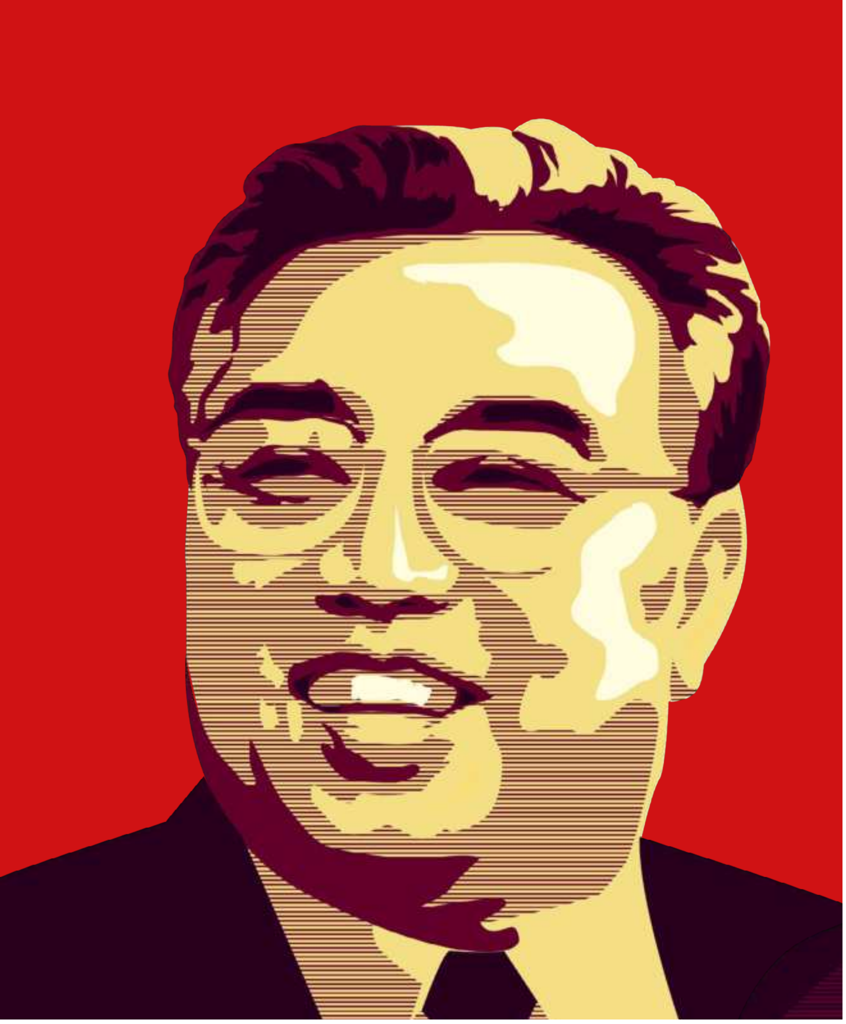
WRITTEN BY PAUL FRENCH

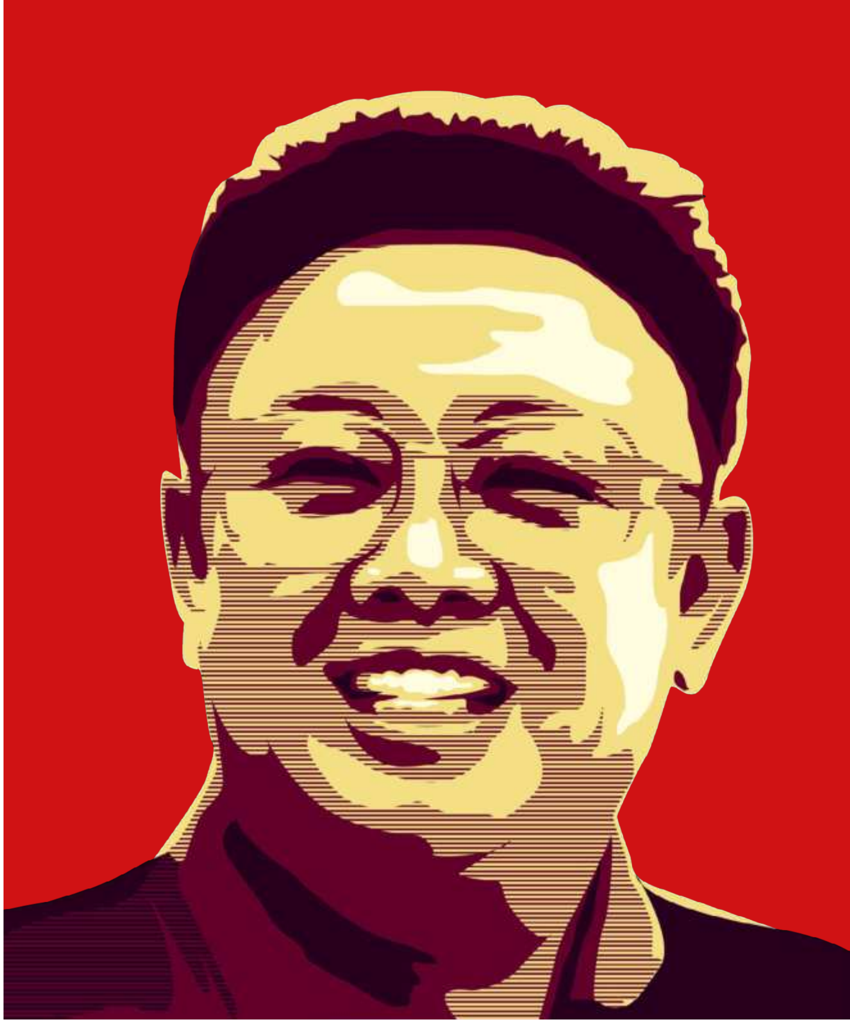
The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), or simply North Korea, was founded in 1948 as a communist state and sponsored by the Soviet Union, who controlled the northern portion of the Korean peninsula after World War II. The American-controlled south saw the formation of the Republic of Korea.

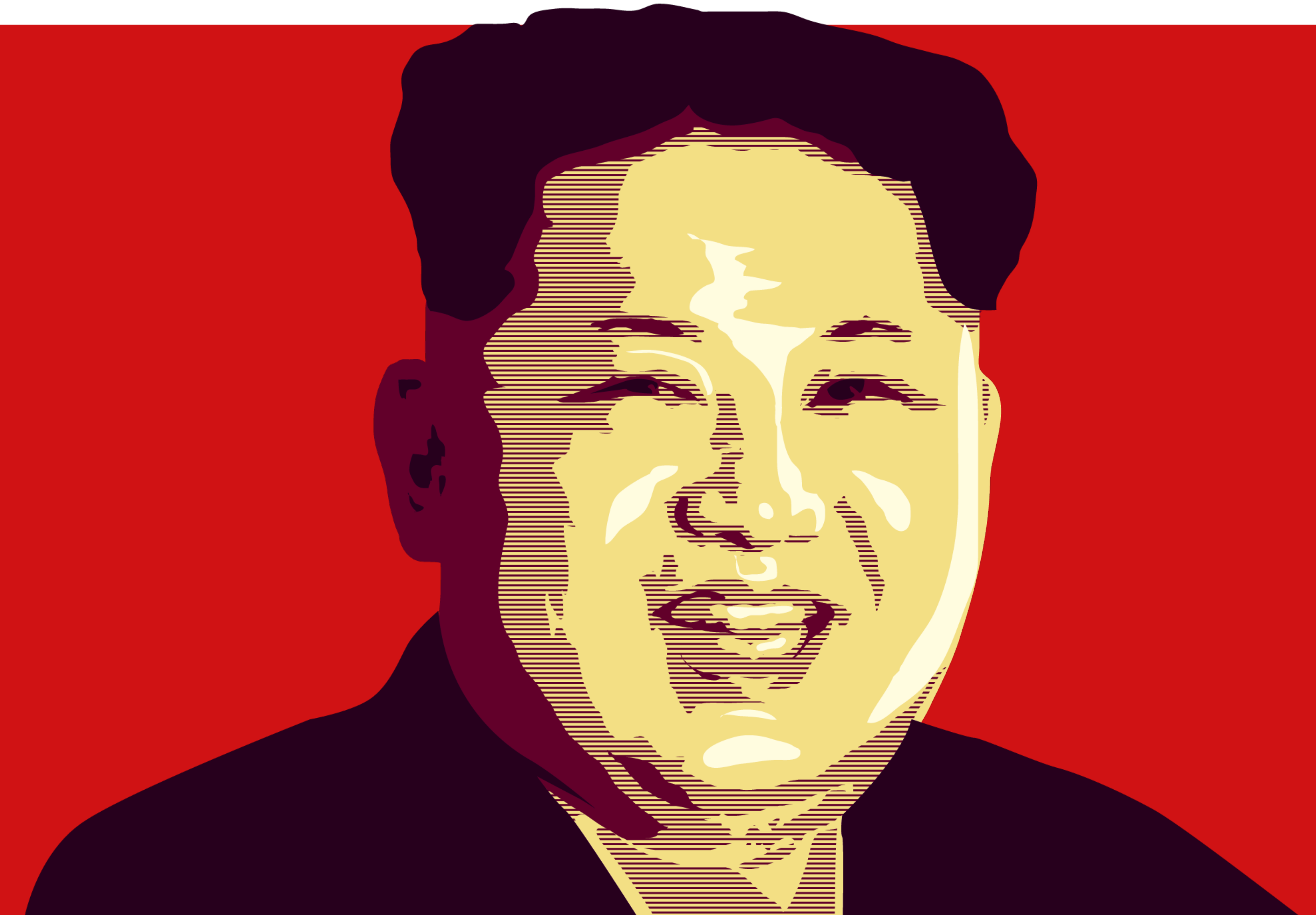
The North, seeking to unify Korea under a one-party Marxist-Leninist government, invaded the South in June 1950. A brutal fratricidal war between the North and South waged for three years until an eventual armistice was achieved, though the war between the Koreas never officially ended. Instead, the peninsula was divided in half by a 250-kilometre (160-mile) long Demilitarised Zone (DMZ). Despite its name, both sides of the DMZ are heavily fortified and the no-man's-land is laden with landmines.

Since then, the North has retreated into total isolation, and its Marxist-Leninist leanings have been replaced by the uniquely North Korean communist philosophy of Juche. Its prewar premier, Kim Il-sung, developed a cult of personality as he consolidated his power for himself and his family, effectively establishing what has become the world's only communist monarchy. Officially, Kim Il-sung is the eternal president of the country, but when he died in 1994, the crown passed to his son, Kim 'Dear Leader' Jong-il. In turn, Jong-il's son, Kim Jong-un, has ruled the rogue state since 2011. The Kim family controls most aspects of life in the North with top jobs in the ruling Korean Workers' Party, running the economy and leading the army. Now North Korea says it has developed nuclear weapons, it will undoubtedly be a Kim who has their finger on the button.

Though the official propaganda may portray the family and its three Supreme Leaders in a glowing light, the Kim dynasty and its two successions have been built on rumours and lies, while their consolidations have seen deadly battles erupt, leaving a trail of bodies that continues to this day.







KIM IL-SUNG

The Eternal President

The obfuscation over the origins and true biographies of the Kim dynasty begin with its founder, Kim Il-sung. Most agree on his birthday, 15 April 1912 (coincidentally the day the Titanic sank), and it is now an annual public holiday in the DPRK, known as the Day of the Sun because 'Il-sung' translates to 'become the sun'. But how did this man rise to become the North's immortal leader of a totalitarian system so all-encompassing that his son and grandson have gone on to take charge of North Korea's 26 million people seemingly – to the North Korean people, at least – without contest?

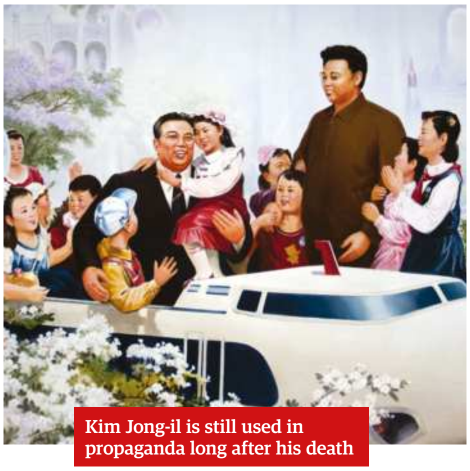
Kim Il-sung's origin myth lies deep in the forests of Manchuria close to the Chinese border. A year before he was born, Japan had colonised all of Korea and later, in 1932, annexed Manchuria as a colony, too. Indeed, Il-sung largely grew up in Manchuria in what is today's Chinese Jilin province. His family was part of the anti-Japanese resistance, but not the humble peasants of later myth – they were pharmacists. During the Second Sino-Japanese War, which began in 1937, Il-sung led a band of possibly as many as 200 Korean resistance fighters. Though later lionised as heroic fighters, it seems they actually spent most of the war isolated and living off the land.

In December 1941, China became part of the much greater Allied war effort as the Americans and Soviets joined the battle against Japan. This was to change Il-sung's fortunes as his motley band of ill-trained rebels was absorbed into far more highly trained, equipped and politically educated Soviet Red Army partisan training camps. Here, he met a fellow guerrilla and Korean anti-Japanese activist Kim Jong-suk. They married and had two sons – the eldest, Kim Jong-il, was born in 1941, though the fact of his birth being in either China or the Soviet Union is never officially mentioned in the North's propaganda. His time spent working with the Red Army, organising regular hit-and-run raids against Japanese forces, was key to Il-sung's political development. He became a close student of Soviet communism, particularly of Stalinism, and moved from being an anti-colonial freedom fighter to a hardcore communist.

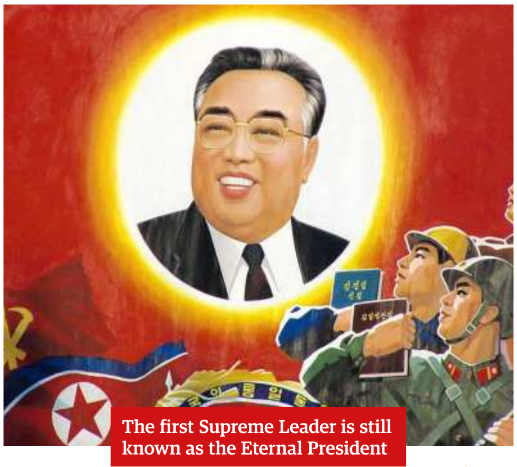
He also applied the outlook and tactics of the guerrilla fighter to all his endeavours – not just fighting the Japanese, but also in how he began to organise for an independent, socialist Korea. Il-sung was such a good student of communism, that Lavrentiy Beria, Deputy Premier of the Soviet Union, recommended that he be their proxy in Korea. The Hot War was ending and the Cold War about to begin – the Russians were determined that their chosen man would be the post-war leader of a unified Korea and ensure the Americans had no influence on the peninsula.

In 1945, the Japanese surrendered and Korea was divided into Soviet and American controlled halves. The North, under Kim Il-sung but with guidance and permission from Moscow, launched an attack on the South in 1950 and three bitter years of war followed until the armistice and the formal division of the peninsula. Retreating into his new domain – north of the 38th parallel and south of the Yalu River border with China – Il-sung got to work on his two most immediate tasks: destroying his enemies within the fledgling DPRK and building his own personality cult. Both activities were to become family businesses.

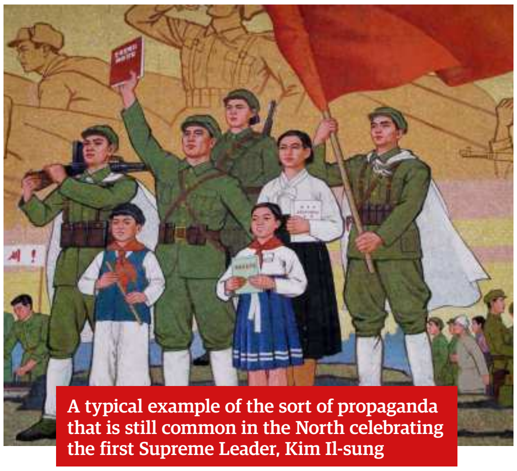
Il-sung quickly turned his attention to consolidation – for a Supreme Leader to be truly



Kim Jong-il is still used in propaganda long after his death



The first Supreme Leader is still known as the Eternal President



A typical example of the sort of propaganda that is still common in the North celebrating the first Supreme Leader, Kim Il-sung supreme there could be no opposition. With help from Moscow, he immediately organised Soviet-style show trials for anyone who challenged him for leadership of the North and those who had been guerrilla fighters in the war. Il-sung had to be the only leader, the undisputed anti-Japanese fighter and uncontested head of the Workers' Party. It was a time of dictators – even though Stalin was recently dead in neighbouring Russia, Chairman Mao was assembling his own personality cult in China, too.

But Kim saw himself as greater than Mao or any Soviet leader. He refused to subordinate himself to either the Soviet Union or the newly founded People's Republic of China. He forged his own third way and created his own variant on Marxism – Juche theory – with himself as the only theoretician. Juche combined Leninism with a little Maoism, a dose of Confucianism and some traditional Korean philosophy all thrown into the ideological pot. Marxism may have positioned him on the red side of the Cold War, but it was the Confucian elements of Juche that laid the groundwork for his communist monarchy. Confucianism advocated filial piety towards the father and the family – in the DPRK's case, towards the father of the nation and the first family of the one-party state: Il-sung and the Kim clan.

The Supreme Leader was in total charge of the country, his enemies slain, those who knew his true origins purged. The economy might be collapsing and the people starving, but he smiled upon them with benevolence with his eldest son at his side. But the Kim cult of personality was just beginning.

Il-sung fostered a cult of personality around himself

THE LEAST FREE STATE ON EARTH

Possession of unauthorised information from outside the country

Being found with anything from outside the DPRK, like DVDs, books, magazines and USB sticks of TV programmes, carries harsh punishments, including imprisonment. South Korean materials in particular are the most closely monitored.

Escaping and seeking refuge overseas

It is a crime to try to leave the country and seek refuge elsewhere. Punishments fluctuate but have included execution at times. Most refugees flee across the Yalu River to China hoping to eventually get to South Korea.

Organised political opposition is banned

All organised political opposition is outlawed, including all alternative political parties, any factions within the ruling Korean Workers' Party or even ad hoc movements.

Independent media is illegal

Pyongyang retains complete control of the media – TV, radio, newspapers and all publications, as well as the highly limited internet access a few high-ranking people are allowed.

No independent free trade unions

As with China next door, all trade unions in the DPRK are state sanctioned and under the control of the Workers' Party. This, the leadership hopes, will stop any version of Poland's Solidarity movement in North Korea.

No unauthorised free market activities

Except for a few occasional highly regulated farmers' markets that come and go, all free market activities – such as the buying and selling of food, clothing, cars or property – are banned.

No religious freedom

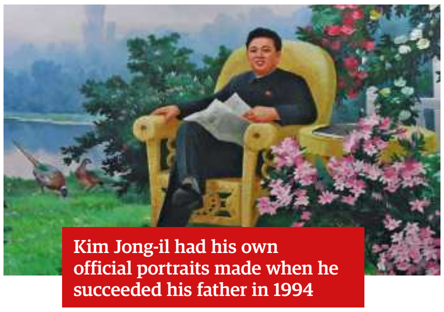
Though the state has created 'Potemkin' churches to show visitors, in reality there is no religious freedom whatsoever in North Korea according to Human Rights Watch.

The songbun system

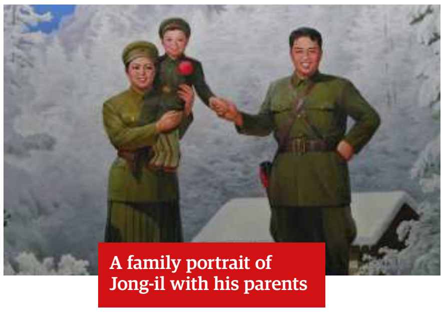
This system affects everyone's employment, residence and schooling, as it is the country's socio-political classification scheme that groups people into loyal, wavering or hostile classes. Climbing up the social ladder is almost unheard of.

KIM JONG-IL

The Dear Leader



Kim Jong-il had his own official portraits made when he succeeded his father in 1994



A family portrait of Jong-il with his parents

Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il are still everywhere in North Korea

The year 1994 was perhaps the worst for North Koreans since the founding of their nation 45 years previously. The country was ravaged by a tragic famine (the result of a disastrous communist planning system), they were feeling the effects of the now dissolved Soviet Union's 'fraternal aid' being cut off, and, Kim Il-sung, father of the nation, died.

For the first time, Western observers saw the mass outpourings of grief that have become such a hallmark of the subsequent deaths of senior leaders in the North. The entire country – much of it starving and economically on its knees – went into an official, Confucian-style three-year period of national mourning.

During that time, and as expected, Kim Jong-il was declared the 'Dear Leader', charged with following in his father's footsteps. So great were those footsteps that Jong-il was declared the North's number two leader and the deceased Il-sung, now entombed and embalmed in a giant mausoleum in the centre of Pyongyang, was named 'Eternal President' – forever the DPRK's Supreme Leader.

Once Il-sung had declared his eldest son as his heir in the 1980s, the personality cult machinery went into full swing and soon there wasn't a single North Korean citizen who did not know Jong-il's official origin story. He was reputedly born on Mount Paektu, Korea's highest and most sacred mountain. As he came into the world, a new star appeared in the sky, a double rainbow appeared, an iceberg on a nearby lake cracked, strange lights filled the sky and a swallow passed by overhead to pass the news of his birth on to the world. The legend went on that a young Jong-il remained by his father's side until the Japanese were defeated, finally expelled from Korea, and Pyongyang liberated for a bright, new communist future.

In fact, Jong-il was born in a guerrilla camp and no strange meteorological or astronomical incidents were reported. His younger brother drowned in 1947 in a swimming pool accident and many have long believed that the older boy pushed the younger under the water and held him down, but evidence of this is unfounded.

Though Kim's official origin may sound comically bizarre to those outside of the country, it makes more sense in the context of the Korean tradition of deploying mythology as a tool to perpetuate tradition and inspire the population. The story is allegory and is probably understood as such by most ordinary North Koreans, even though it served to raise the stature of Jong-il and perpetuate the mythos of the personality cult that came to surround him and his family.

Despite the propaganda, Jong-il's reign wasn't guaranteed. The North Korean Army's leadership thought him weak – not a soldier like his father. However, Jong-il had proved he was suitably blood thirsty early on. As a senior official under his father, Jong-il is thought to have ordered the 1983 bombing in Rangoon that killed 17 visiting South Korean officials. Additionally, some high-level defectors have claimed that he ordered the 1987 shooting down of a South Korean airliner that killed all 115 passengers on board.

The Koreans have a proverb: 'Tiger father, dog son'. It was thought to be whispered by some army officers alongside rumours of Jong-il's legendary louche life of massive French cognac consumption, Hollywood movies and mistresses. Most of those army officers were purged. He also put on more show trials and sentenced executions in the style of his father's reign.

The so-called Dear Leader secured total power. Across the country, statues and posters went up showing the two rulers together and North Koreans pinned the ubiquitous lapel badges featuring the father and son to their clothes – to lose or forget

"YOU WILL DROWN IN A SEA OF FLAMES"

Blue House Raid

21 January 1968

This was an attempt by North Korean commandos to assassinate the South Korean president, Park Chung-hee, in his residence, the Blue House in Seoul. It is thought the attack was in response to Park's support of the US in the Vietnam War. 26 South Koreans were killed.

Pueblo incident

23 January 1968

Although outside North Korean waters, USS Pueblo was seized by the North Korean Navy. All 83 crewmembers were captured and one killed, creating a diplomatic incident. The ship remains moored on Pyongyang's Taedong River as a tourist attraction.

Discovery of incursion tunnels

15 November 1974

South Korean and American forces at the DMZ were shocked to discover four tunnels crossing the zone that had been dug by North Korea. The tunnels were 91 by 121 centimetres, reinforced with concrete and had electric lighting.

The axe murder incident

18 August 1976

US Army officers were cutting down trees in the DMZ when they were attacked by DPRK soldiers. Two Americans were killed by the North Koreans, who oddly claimed that Kim Il-sung had planted the trees.

Korean Air Flight 858

29 November 1987

Korean Air Flight 858 between Baghdad and Seoul that exploded in mid-air upon the detonation of a bomb planted by North Korean agents. It was the 34th anniversary of the end of the Korean War, and the attack is thought to have been masterminded by Kim Jong-il himself to derail unification talks.

North Korea's first nuclear test

9 October 2006

Despite the 'Sunshine Policy' from South Korea to defuse tensions on the peninsula and six-party talks involving the North with the South, China, Russia, Japan and the US to seek dialogue, the DPRK exploded a nuclear bomb in direct contravention of international treaties.

to wear one became a crime. The king and the prince were on every classroom wall, subway carriage, jacket and street poster.

Jong-il had one more plan to consolidate power and ensure no rivals in the army ever rose up and contemplated a coup: nuclear weapons. He tore up every arms control agreement his father had signed and restarted the North's nuclear weapons development programme.

Billions of won (North Korea's currency) were devoted to the project while the country remained hungry in the North's desperate countryside, and power blackouts became more and more common in even privileged Pyongyang. But nukes could give Jong-il total power; they were weapons of mass destruction that he would control and ones that could subordinate the conventional armed forces. The Dear Leader, with his finger on the button, was arguably the deadliest man in the world.

There may be many exaggerations about Kim Jong-il's life, but his fondness for mistresses was a fact. He had a son in 1971, Kim Jong-nam, with Song Hye-rim, a leading North Korean movie actress and beauty. He also had two more sons, Kim Jong-chul in 1981 and Kim Jong-un in 1984, with Ko Yong-hui. Other mistresses followed before he finally married Kim Young-sook, the daughter of a high-ranking Workers' Party leader and Kim clan loyalist.

As was the ancient Korean imperial tradition, the three sons and heirs were brought up separately, rarely – if ever – meeting, and then only at state occasions for a matter of moments. Yet, as Kim Jong-il increasingly became a sick and dying man, it was to be the battle between these three siblings that would almost destroy the monarchy created by his father and lead to exile, feuding and, perhaps, fratricidal murder.

Jong-il (bottom left) with his family

SHAKIER THAN YOU MIGHT THINK

The Kim dynasty projects an aura of total control, but there have been challenges to it...

The rumours over the years are varied: bodyguards-turned-assassins, army generals starting coups and fratricidal in-fighting. But they have largely been just that – rumours.

After the cessation of hostilities in 1953, Kim Il-sung showed he learned from Stalin by holding a show trial for a dozen party officials accused of aiding the Japanese and plotting to replace him. All 12 were found guilty and executed. Whether there was any truth to their collaboration with the Japanese is questionable. A year later the former leader of the Korean Communist Party in the South moved to the DPRK. He was deemed a possible challenger. A Moscow-style show trial was staged and he, too, was executed.

Rumours continued to swirl. In the late 1960s, China claimed that Kim Il-sung had been arrested by coup-plotting army generals – it wasn't true. In 1970, several senior army commanders were again purged for opposing the Supreme Leader's policies, while there have long been rumours of a coup attempt in 1992 by Moscow-trained soldiers.

Kim Jong-il has faced challenges, too. Stories circulated of a planned coup by army units in the famine-stricken northeast region in 1995. In 1998, a shoot-out between police and soldiers led to a curfew in Pyongyang in what, it is assumed, was a direct challenge to Jong-il's rule.

Coups fomented from outside are rumoured, too. The George W Bush administration always refused to rule out a pre-emptive strike on the North, while the Pentagon's 'Operational Plan 5030' was designed to use South Korea and American troop operations to diminish the DPRK's resources, wear down their military and promote a coup attempt. But it was never put into action.

And now one more rumour. After purging and executing his own uncle, Kim Jong-un was faced with a possible coup led by his exiled half-brother, Jong-nam. That attempt ended in Kuala Lumpur International Airport in February 2017.

The North likes to issue dramatic threats, and has done so regularly throughout its seven decades of existence

The sinking of ROKS Cheonan

26 March 2010

This is perhaps the closest the North and South have come to renewed war. The South Korean warship ROKS Cheonan was sunk by an explosion thought to be from the North. 104 crewmembers were killed or injured and there were demonstrations of anger and grief in Seoul.

Yeonpyeong Island firefights

23 November 2010

The North deliberately fired at the South-controlled Yeonpyeong Island, killing two South Korean soldiers and two civilians. The South returned fire, killing ten DPRK soldiers. The South evacuated the island for the islanders' own safety.

Drone wars

24 March 2014

The South accused North Korea of flying drones close to the Blue House in Seoul. DPRK drones were shot down at sea, close to the South's capital, and flying across the DMZ to spy on South Korean and American military installations.

DMZ landmines

4 August 2015

Confirmation that the DPRK was planting additional and highly explosive landmines in the DMZ came with the wounding of two South Korean soldiers who stepped on mines. The North denied planting them.

Yeoncheon missile attacks

20 August 2015

In a highly provocative attack, the DPRK fired conventional missiles at the southern city of Yeoncheon, home to 46,000 people. Citizens were evacuated into specially built bunkers, and South Korean artillery fired several times back into the DPRK. High-level talks were convened immediately to de-escalate the tension, though the North failed to explain why they acted as they did.

Anti-ship missiles unveiled

8 June 2017

After several rounds of missile tests that provoked the US 7th Fleet to approach the DPRK's coast, the North fired anti-ship missiles into the Sea of Japan. Pyongyang was particularly unhappy about the US deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense anti-ballistic missile shield around the South Korean capital, Seoul.

ENJOYING THE GOOD LIFE IN A BAD COUNTRY

While the general population struggles to survive, the North Korean leaders indulge in Western luxuries

$720,000 a year in Cognac

Kim Jong-il was a legendary consumer of Hennessy Paradis Cognac and the brand's largest private buyer

At least a dozen Harleys

Kim Jong-il, and his son, Kim Jong-un, have had a long fascination with Harley Davidson motorbikes, although they can only ride them in their high-security compounds

4 packs of Rothmans a day

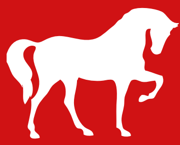
Kim Jong-il reputedly smoked four packs of imported Rothmans cigarettes a day before publicly quitting. His son, though, is a confirmed smoker, but he smokes a more patriotic copycat version of Rothmans called Paektusan

one Mercedes

Kim Jong-un only has one personal Merc, but it's a limited edition Mercedes-Benz 600 luxury sedan

20 jet skis

Kim Jong-un enjoys jet skiing with his close associates. He is thought to have at least 20 jet skis that he rides around one of his private artificial lakes



NINE white Orlov trotter horses

20,000 movies in his library

Kim Jong-il allowed one channel of TV and no foreign films in his country, yet had a private video library of 20,000 Rambo, James Bond, kung fu and horror movies

Kim Jong-un oversees a drill of the Korean People's Army

Pyongyang residents take part in a rally commemorating the Korean War

Crowds in Pyongyang watch a TV screen showing their new Supreme Leader Kim Jong-un at a Central Committee Meeting

As yet, the young leader's personality cult is not fully formed, though it seems he will seek to imitate his grandfather rather than father in his look

KIM JONG-UN

The Supreme Leader

It was never intended, at least not by Kim Jong-il, that his youngest son, Jong-un, would ever rule the DPRK. From the late 1990s, the Dear Leader determined that his eldest Jong-nam, regardless of being born out of wedlock, should continue the Kim dynasty and control North Korea some day. But that decision was taken without considering Jong-nam's suitability or what Jong-il's wife thought of his mistress' child taking the leadership from her own sons. What happened next really does deserve the much-overused epithet of 'Shakespearean'.

In 2001, Jong-nam took his son and mistress to Japan. It was a foolhardy trip – not only is Japan a sworn enemy of the DPRK, but the man touted to be the next leader of the world's most hardline communist state was going to visit an icon of capitalist decadence, Tokyo Disneyland. And all on fake Dominican Republic passports.

He was caught at the airport by Japanese passport control officials. His father was so embarrassed that he cancelled a long-planned trip to the DPRK's only ally, China. Jong-nam was officially in disgrace. He had forfeited the role of heir to the throne and was cast out into exile, moving to anonymity in Macau.

There are those who believe that Jong-il's wife and the DPRK's 'Supreme Mother', Young-sook, was behind Jong-nam's apprehension at Tokyo's Narita Airport. She did not want the offspring of a mistress to usurp her eldest son, and so Jong-chul became the heir apparent, groomed to be leader, seen at his father's side and with Young-sook beaming wide.

But something went wrong and Jong-chul was sidelined. Some said his father thought he lacked the necessary ruthlessness to be a dictator, others that Young-sook had always seen her youngest but most beloved son, Jong-un, as the heir. Jong-chul disappeared from the headlines in Pyongyang, his picture stopped appearing and suddenly, beside his now visibly ailing father, was a young man, barely in his 20s – Kim Jong-un.

His years of debauchery finally caught up with him, and Kim Jong-il died in December 2011. Briefly, out of public view, the three brothers paid their respects to their father at the enormous mausoleum where he was embalmed and placed alongside the eternal president, Kim Il-sung, at the Kumsusan Palace of the Sun in central Pyongyang. Jong-nam came back from exile in Macau under Beijing's protection, Jong-chul from internal exile (having recently been seen in Singapore at an Eric Clapton concert), and they stood alongside the new Supreme Leader, 28-year-old Kim Jong-un. They were together for a matter of moments and then Jong-chul disappeared back into his Pyongyang home and Jong-nam flew back to Macau.

The world underestimated Jong-un. He was ridiculed overseas for being too young, too inexperienced and a playboy like his father, who seemed to prefer hob-nobbing with minor basketball celebrities and good living to turning around an ailing economy and isolated country. But Jong-un surprised everyone. Not only has he accelerated the nuclear programme and edged ever closer to a deliverable missile, but he has also managed to slightly rejuvenate the country's economy, too. Alongside all this, he has proved to any who have doubted them his hard man credentials. Arguably, of the three Supreme Leaders of the DPRK, it is Kim Jong-un who has been the most ruthless.

Political purging is now an established tactic of regime survival for the Kim clan, but Jong-un has taken it to new levels of barbarity. Within three years of his rule, he initiated the purging of at least 70 senior officials. And if anyone questioned that he was truly a supreme leader, he shocked even ordinary North Koreans (usually given only the most opaque news of what is happening at the centre) by publicly, on prime time television in the DPRK, having his own uncle and one-time close mentor, arrested.

Jang Song-thaek, the number two leader of North Korea, was arguably the leading male role model in Jong-un's early life, given his own father's distance. But in the end this didn't save him – Jang was accused of treachery and plotting a coup. He endured a show trial and was then summarily executed.

Jang's execution appeared to be the final consolidation of Supreme Leader Kim Jong-un's total power. But perhaps there was one piece of unfinished business that nagged at him, a source of potential opposition, a problem from long ago that could become an issue tomorrow – his disgraced and exiled half-brother, Kim Jong-nam. In February 2017, Jong-nam visited Kuala Lumpur and spent several days there, though it is unclear who he met. He then went to the city's airport to catch a flight back to Macau. In the departures terminal, two women threw a poisoned towel over his face and killed him. They were caught but knew nothing. A number of North Korean men wanted by Malaysian police disappeared; the DPRK's embassy denied everything and sought to recover Jong-nam's body before an autopsy could be performed. It is very likely that, despite ongoing trials in Kuala Lumpur, nothing will ever be conclusively proved. But if there was anyone who could lead a coup against Jong-un, it was Jong-nam. That option is now gone and Kim Jong-un rules truly supreme.

But what happens next is less clear than ever. Jong-un is 36, married to Ri Sol-ju, the daughter of close Kim dynasty associates, and they are believed to have three children. His sister, Kim Yo-jong, another possible successor, is also becoming an increasingly public and powerful presence. Add to the mix the nuclear sabre-rattling and the future of the DPRK is far from certain.

COLD WAR

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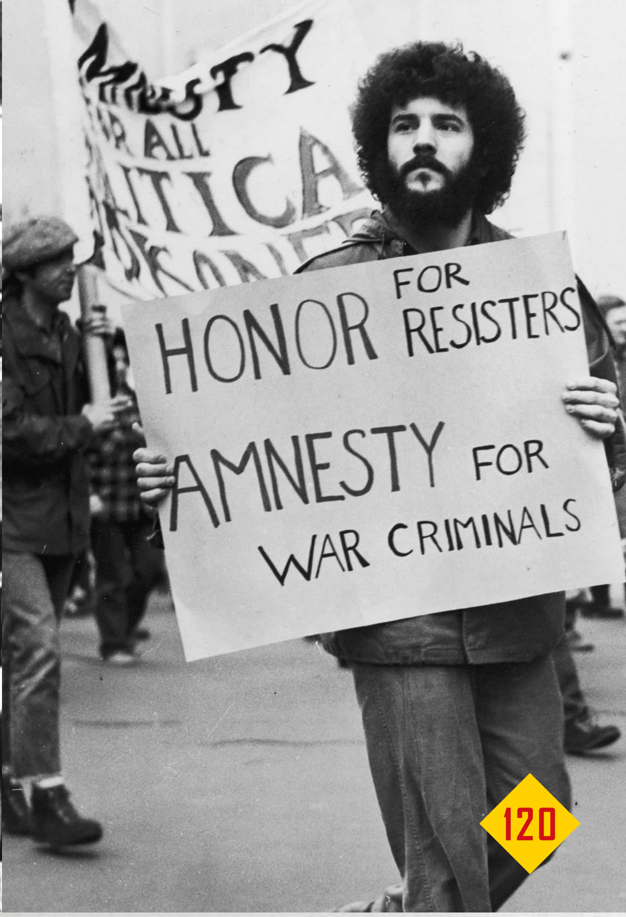
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LIFE IN THE SHADOW OF THE COLD WAR

For four decades, Cold War politics and the fear of the bomb infiltrated the lives of ordinary citizens at work and at home

In the view of some historians, the Third World War has actually already taken place and was just that: a war in the 'third world'. Between the late 1940s and late 1980s, the superpowers sought to 'outsource' the job of fighting each other directly (not an option with thousands of nuclear warheads pointed at each other's cities) to various proxy battlefields throughout the developing world.

As a result, for the several million citizens of the 'first' and 'second' worlds, the Cold War was something that rumbled away in the background of their lives.

The morning paper or evening news might run with accounts of the Berlin Wall's erection in mid-1961, nuclear arms talks between presidents Nixon and Brezhnev or revelations about spy rings and defections. Meanwhile, work and family life went on.

But the Cold War did touch ordinary citizens. Compulsory military service ensured the United States of America, Europe and the Warsaw Pact sent hundreds of thousands of young men to various Cold War battlefields.

The three largest such flashpoints – Korea (1950-53), Vietnam (1946-75) and Afghanistan (1979-89) – killed tens of thousands of soldiers and sent millions of veterans home carrying both mental and physical scars, with profound consequences for their families and wider society.

Cold War considerations often affected education and employment prospects. Involvement in a strike, popular protest or political campaigning could elicit secret monitoring from an intelligence agency. The Cold War could even invade the home: fear of communism or nuclear attack regularly cropped up in novels, movies and even pop music.

The ultimate nightmare of the era, that civilisation might one day suddenly vanish beneath a thermo-nuclear fireball, was often a hard one to avoid.

SPY RINGS AND INTELLIGENCE GATHERING

With Nazism comprehensively destroyed in Europe, relations between the Soviet Union and the West soon soured. In the late 1940s, Western fears that the heirs of Lenin were as good as their rhetoric, intent on colouring the world Bolshevik red, seemed to be coming true.

In September 1945, a defecting clerk from the Soviet embassy provided a tranche of documents proving that Moscow was actively recruiting agents in the West. Public anxiety was stoked by the 1948 perjury conviction of the former diplomat Alger Hiss in connection with spying charges. In June 1953, governmental employees Julius and Ethel Rosenberg went to the electric chair having been convicted of espionage. That same year, the Korean War armistice was signed: when UN and communist POWs were exchanged, 22 American and one British soldier elected to accompany their erstwhile captors back to China.

In October 1962, John Vassall, a former staffer at the British embassy in Moscow, later employed by the Admiralty's Navy Intelligence Agency,

Cinematic depictions of a nuclear attack reinforced the fears of Western populations about the communist menace

Stanley Kubrick's *Dr Strangelove* was one of several high-profile films to satirise the Cold War standoff

A scene from the 1983 ABC television movie *The Day After*, which depicted a nuclear attack on Kansas

was sentenced to 18 years' imprisonment after a defecting KGB officer exposed him as having passed thousands of documents to the Soviets. In an era where homosexuality carried a lengthy prison sentence, Vassall was being blackmailed by the KGB: during his Moscow posting, they had lured him to a party, drugged him and photographed him in compromising positions with some sailors.

The fear of a Red rising gripped America. Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy mesmerised his audiences with warnings of a vast network of Red subversion across the United States. Indeed, the communist authorities were hard at work infiltrating the corridors of capitalist power. The KGB recruited spies working on the Manhattan Project, tasked with building the first atomic bomb. One such spy, David Greenglass, brother of Ethel Rosenberg, had actually worked at the atomic laboratory in Los Alamos, New Mexico.

In the 1940s, the terrible cruelty and ineptitude of the communist system was not yet fully apparent. Across the world, many educated and privileged people saw it as a viable alternative to a capitalist system that had led to two world wars and a depression.

In May 1961, George Blake, a senior MI6 operative formerly stationed in West Berlin, was uncovered as a Soviet double agent and sentenced to 42 years imprisonment (he escaped in 1966 and fled to the USSR).

The consequences of being associated with even mildly left-wing causes was not lost on the public: American life in the 1950s was consequently marked by widespread conformity and conservatism.

Successive administrations dragged their feet on Civil Rights legislation and overestimated the US's willingness to see tens of thousands of its youth die in defence of an unstable anti-communist regime in South Vietnam.

The merest suspicion of communist sympathies could ruin a career almost instantly. In an attempt to assuage public fears of pro-Soviet subversion, President Harry Truman established the Loyalty Review Board in 1947, and within five years 200 federal employees had been dismissed on suspicion of communist leanings.

In Britain, college graduates entering careers in the Ministry of Defence, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, intelligence services and some sectors of the nuclear industry would be vetted and bound by the Official Secrets Act of 1911. Under Section 1, anyone guilty of betraying state secrets would face a prison sentence "not exceeding 14 years".

Even graduates entering the BBC would have their political affiliations investigated. Until 1985, MI5 maintained 'Room 105' within its head

NATIONAL SERVICE

Military service meant a 'hot' Cold War for millions of young men

In 1948, the Selective Services Act required American males aged 18 to 26 to register for 21 months of active service with five years of reserve duty. That same year, Britain's National Service Act required males aged 17 to 21 to serve in the armed forces, although exemptions were granted for essential services such as farming, mining and the merchant navy.

By 1958, two years before National Service ended, over 100,000 British troops – one-seventh of the entire force – was stationed in the Middle East or Asia, although the size of the army would be considerably reduced during the 1960s.

National Service frequently put young British men on the front lines of the Cold War: by 1965, 64,000 troops were stationed in West Germany, while there was direct confrontation with communist forces in Malaya (1948-60) and Korea (1950-53).

During the Vietnam War, a series of deferments could get a young American male out of active service. Reasons for these included religious beliefs and a college education. Even so, it is estimated that most of the 3.4 million men who served in 1964-75 were volunteers. The draft was abolished in 1973 after various assessments concluded that a volunteer army would be more effective.

offices where a special assistant to the director of personnel vetted applicants for jobs.

For millions of working-class men, even those who had avoided military service, the Cold War was closer than they realised.

Britain's intelligence services monitored the trade unions, particularly during the widespread industrial unrest of the 1970s. As leader of the Transport and General Workers' Union between 1969 and 1978, Jack Jones was considered one of the most powerful men in the country. A veteran of the Spanish Civil War, he consistently denied that he was employed by the KGB. Like Hugh Scanlon of the similarly powerful Amalgamated Union of Electrical Workers, Jones was targeted by MI5, his telephone being bugged by the security agency in the early 1970s at the behest of Prime Minister Edward Heath.

The intelligence services kept tabs on hundreds of thousands of citizens involved in political campaigning or simply partaking in a public demonstration. Files were compiled on the Anti-Nazi League, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, and Militant.

A large, mainly female peace movement arose in the early 1980s, particularly after RAF Greenham in Berkshire was designated as a base for cruise missiles to counter the SS-20 missiles that the Soviets had moved into Eastern Europe. The 'peace camp' established by the women around the base perimeter was infiltrated by MI5, although no evidence emerged that communism played a part in their activism.

On both sides of the Atlantic, much intelligence gathering took place largely without public debate or press scrutiny. For many years after its establishment in October 1952, for example, the existence of the National Security Agency (NSA) was never publicly admitted. Government employees routinely dubbed the NSA 'No Such Agency'. One of its operations, code-named Minaret, saw the NSA track the communications of journalists, celebrities and civil rights leaders who opposed the Vietnam War. The operation was not terminated until May 1975, when the hearings of the Senate Intelligence Committee, chaired by Senator Frank Church, ruled Minaret unconstitutional and possibly illegal.

American citizens frequently took part in 'Duck and Cover' exercises such as this

FEAR OF THE HOLOCAUST

For some citizens, the spectre of a nuclear blast came early in life. Funded by the US Government's civil defence programme, the nine-minute *Duck and Cover* cartoon introduced American schoolchildren to Bert the Turtle after January 1952. American schools even performed drills where children would drop everything and assume foetal positions in anticipation of the air-raid sirens. Other endeavours to prepare the public for nuclear war included the 1950 *Survival Under Nuclear Attack* booklet and *Stars For Defence*, a series of public information albums recorded for the US Federal Civil Defence Administration for broadcast on specific dates between 1956 and 1964. These combined music and interviews; featured artists included Bing Crosby and Ertha Kitt.

In Britain, civil defence leaflets dated back to 1938, and pamphlets and prepared radio bulletins were assembled in the post-war era. The most controversial programme was probably 'Protect and Survive', issued by the British Government in May 1980.

Booklets, costing 50 pence in peacetime but free during a national emergency, were accompanied by ten cartoons that instructed families on the construction of makeshift shelters along with information on food, sanitation and fallout warnings.

Criticised by the peace movement as portraying nuclear war as somehow survivable, Protect and Survive was nonetheless predicated on an assumption of several weeks of East-West tensions providing a warning.

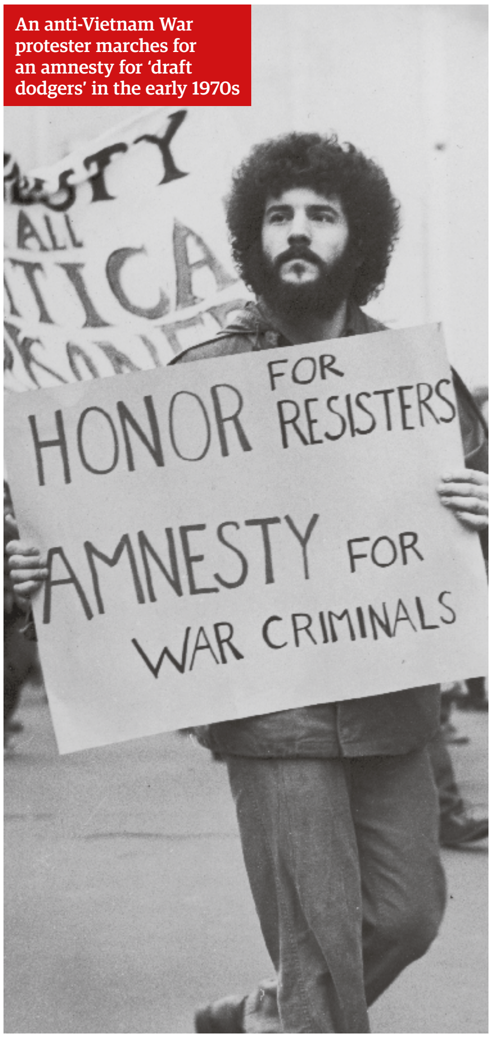
In such a scenario, key civil servants would be discreetly instructed to report to underground bunkers that would function as 'regional seats' of government during and after the attack. Certain roads and air and sea ports might fall under military jurisdiction. Peacetime civil liberties would likely be suspended.

Evacuation plans also existed: an internal memo from 1953 estimated that 5 million Britons could be sent to the countryside, with 4 million following. Government plans in 1962 provided for the evacuation of approximately 10 million people from 19 cities.

In the US, CBS aired *A Day Called X* in December 1957, a film that depicted the implementation of civil defence protocols in Portland, Oregon, in the event of a Soviet attack.

It had been similar to Operation Greenlight in 1955. Directed from Kelly Butte Bunker, the local emergency operations centre, Greenlight managed to evacuate Portland's city centre in 19 minutes with the use of trucks, cars and designated dispersal points. By 1983, President Ronald Reagan had announced a $10-billion budget for the existing Crisis Relocation Plan. This described a three-day plan to evacuate urban centres to rural 'host' areas.

Soviet citizens were also issued booklets on civil defence, though only after 1954 did these refer to nuclear attack. An estimated 1,500 bunkers existed in the Soviet Union by the 1980s, capable of holding 175,000 personnel.



An anti-Vietnam War protester marches for an amnesty for 'draft dodgers' in the early 1970s

A protester at Greenham Common RAF base is dragged away by the police

But the authorities, both in the East and West, had few illusions about how little 'post-attack' contingency plans would match the reality of a nuclear holocaust. While still chancellor of the exchequer in the mid 1950s, Harold MacMillan admitted that, "We cannot hope to emerge from a global war except in ruins."

In October 1968, the Ministry of Defence produced a speculative scenario describing the country following multiple nuclear strikes. Divided into 12 zones of "wretched and desperate survivors," Britain would in theory be governed by a war cabinet housed in the massive 'Turnstile' bunker under the southern Cotswolds.

In practice, millions of citizens would already be dead and millions more falling victim to untreated injuries, severe radiation poisoning and disease epidemics.

Law and order would be a thing of the past, together with electricity, sanitation and basic communications. During the Cold War, it was often opined that should nuclear war ever break out, the luckiest citizens would die instantly.

NUCLEAR BOMB CULTURE

So insidious was the nightmare of nuclear annihilation that it inevitably left its mark on popular culture. Cold War culture impacted on what audiences could watch. In 1947, the House of Un-American Activities (HUAC) conducted investigations into the supposed communist affiliations of members of the movie industry.

Convicted of contempt of Congress, the so-called 'Hollywood Ten' (a group of directors and screenwriters) were blacklisted by the studios for decades. Eventually, more than 300 actors, radio commentators, directors and writers were boycotted: some artists such as Charlie Chaplin, Paul Robeson and Orson Welles relocated abroad.

The activities of the HUAC encouraged the studios to back such anti-communist movies as *The Red Menace* (1949), *Guilty Of Treason* (1950), *Red Planet Mars* (1952) and *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962).

With UFO sightings in vogue throughout the 1950s in the US, Hollywood science fiction often conflated alien with communist invasion. The gradual subordination of small-town America by vegetable-like pods in the classic 1956 blockbuster *Invasion Of The Bodysnatchers* is an obvious McCarthyite metaphor.

In Britain, the Boulting Brothers produced *High Treason* (1951), which focused on a group of local subversives - most of them bohemians and implied deviants - attempting to capture Britain's power stations ahead of a communist takeover. But Cold War-themed popular culture was more often geared towards the public appetite for action and glamour: the James Bond novels of Ian Fleming and subsequent movies being the most obvious example.

Nor was Cold War culture without scepticism. Throughout the 'Karla trilogy' of novels by John Le Carré (the former MI6 operative John Cornwell), the jaded intelligence operative George Smiley wonders if his opponents' methods are much different to his own.

As early as 1963, Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop produced *Oh! What A Lovely War*, which satirized post-imperial and Cold War delusions. The following year, Stanley Kubrick's *Dr Strangelove: Or How I Learned To Stop Worrying*

And Love The Bomb saw Peter Sellers lampoon various political and military stereotypes of the age. Later on, overtly anti-communist films like *Red Dawn* (1984), *Invasion USA* (1985) and the 'Rambo' movies were generally regarded as little more than action vehicles for the likes of Sylvester Stallone and Chuck Norris.

By contrast, nuclear war fiction was consistently apocalyptic. Even in the 1950s few people doubted the appalling consequences of a nuclear exchange. In William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (1954) a nuclear war precedes the plane crash at the novel's opening. When a group of boys, isolated on an island, descend into savagery, the allusion to post-holocaust anarchy is clear.

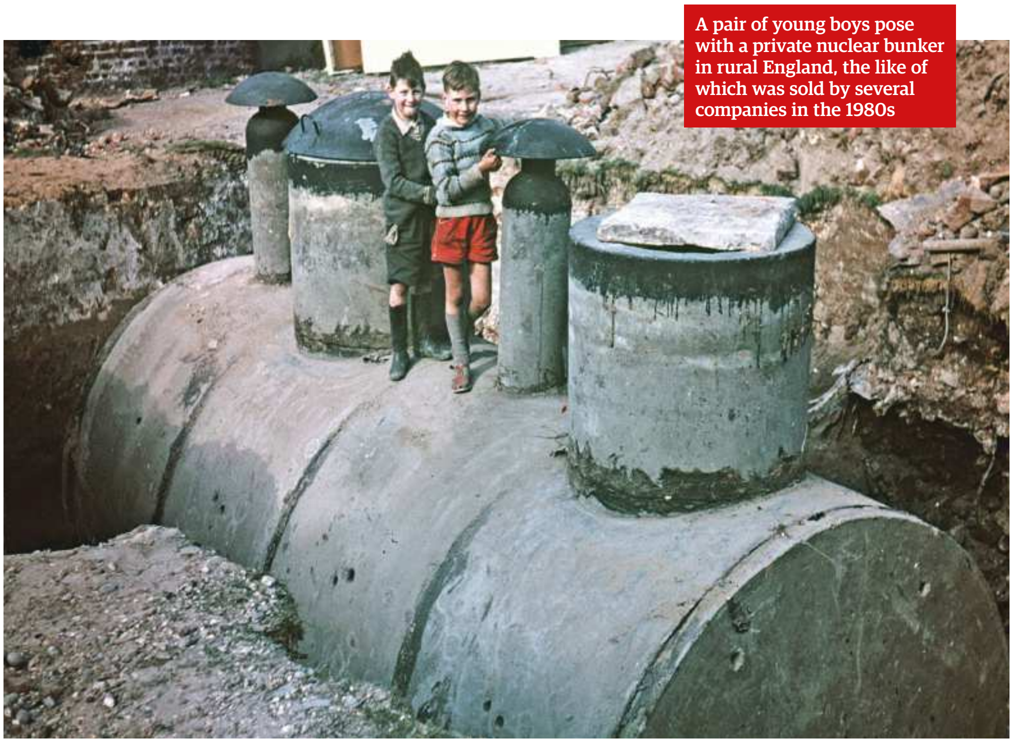
Again science fiction during the period frequently presented a post-nuclear future in which the scattered remnants of humanity had relapsed into barbarism. So ingrained was the fear of annihilation that, in November 1965, the BBC announced it would not broadcast *The War Game*, a 47-minute docudrama in which a nuclear missile hits Rochester, Kent. In the following weeks anarchy ensues, looters are executed and mass cremations of the dead take place.

The BBC Director General Hugh Greene claimed the programme was too shocking for public viewing, and *The War Game* was not shown until 1985. Similar post-nuclear dramas such as ABC's *The Day After* (1983) or the BBC's *Threads* (1984) were no less grim. In the 1986 animated feature *When The Wind Blows*, an elderly couple faithfully adhere to the instructions in their 'Protect and Survive' pamphlet only to succumb to radiation sickness soon after the blast.

Nuclear warfare even found its way onto the airwaves. In the 1960s, following the Cuban Missile Crisis, a radio might have resounded with the tones of Bob Dylan's *A Hard Rain's A Gonna Fall* or Barry Maguire's *The Eve Of Destruction*. 20 years later, with US troops in Grenada, Soviet troops in Afghanistan and protestors besieging Greenham Common, nuclear-themed pop hits offered quite a contrast to the usual content of the charts. Among these were *Two Tribes* (Frankie Goes to Hollywood), *Breathing* (Kate Bush) *99 Red Balloons* (Nena) and *1999* (Prince).

Behind the Iron Curtain, similarly apocalyptic themes were less evident, although artists could sometimes comment obliquely on the arms race or Afghanistan, and by the glasnost period of the late 1980s, *The Day After* was finally shown on Soviet television. It might be argued, however, that Soviet audiences knew more about 'total' – albeit non-nuclear – warfare than their Western counterparts during this time.

The terrible devastation of the western Soviet Union in 1941-45, like Hiroshima and Nagasaki, seemed like a dark omen of what could happen should the world slide back into all-out warfare. If the world powers ever fought a Third World War, they would not fight a fourth one.



A pair of young boys pose with a private nuclear bunker in rural England, the like of which was sold by several companies in the 1980s

THE ROCK WAR

With the world's attention focused on the nuclear arms race and proxy wars raging in developing countries, the cultural provenance of the Soviet collapse was quite often overlooked

Early rock stars such as Elvis Presley and the Beatles had an underground following in the USSR, but foreign radio stations were often blocked; by the 1980s, the authorities were spending $3 billion a year to jam anti-communist transmissions from the West.

Although restricted in their lyrical content, songwriters often made oblique criticisms of the communist system. However, the Soviet authorities did tolerate local and foreign pop considered apolitical. In March 1980, 'Spring Rhythms' held in Tbilisi, Georgia, was the Soviet Union's first rock festival. Later, as Mikhail Gorbachev's perestroika reforms took effect, punk and new wave groups began to be more critical of the system. In May 1979 Elton John became the first Western rock star to play in the Soviet Union. Over the next few years, acts like Santana, Billy Joel and James Taylor would follow.

VIETNAM

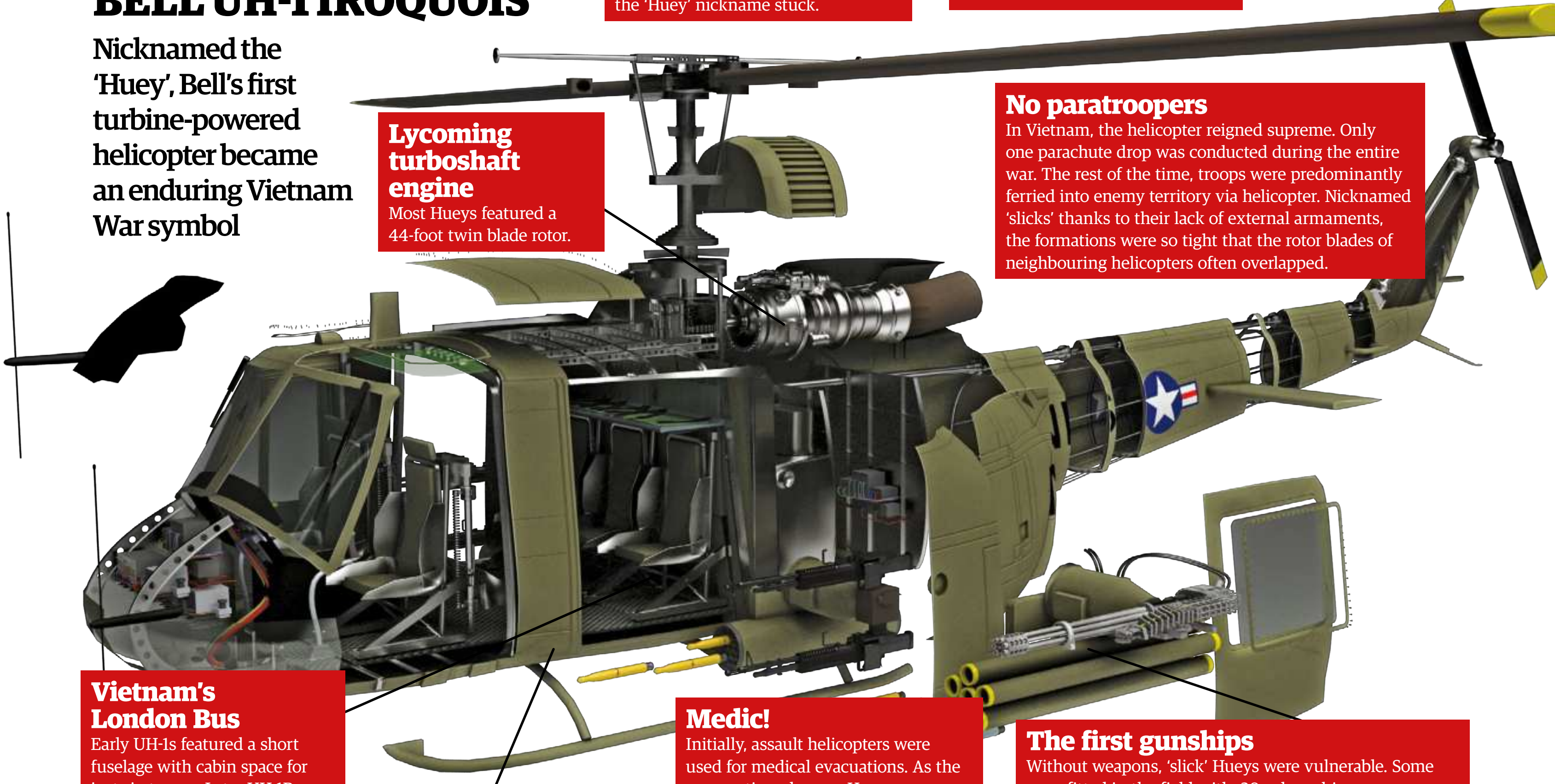
The machines, weapons, battles and heroes of this most iconic conflict

The Second Indochina War, better known in the West as the Vietnam War, affected the lives of millions, and whole generations on both sides of the conflict were changed forever by the horrors experienced. The jungles, skies and rivers of Vietnam became just the latest battleground in the seemingly unending fight against what the US perceived as the global threat of communism.

With the military might of one of the world's superpowers clashing with highly effective guerilla tactics, the war featured some of the deadliest weapons, the most effective hardware, and it saw some of the most unbelievable feats of human bravery. Decades after US ground operations began, we take a look at some of the most important machines, battles and heroes of this devastating war.

BELL UH-1 IROQUOIS

Nicknamed the 'Huey', Bell's first turbine-powered helicopter became an enduring Vietnam War symbol



The nickname

Bell's original model designation was 'HU-1'. Even when renamed to UH-1, the 'Huey' nickname stuck.

Service in Vietnam

More than 16,000 Bell UH-1s were produced between 1955 and 1976, with over 7,000 of them seeing active service.

Lycoming turboshaft engine

Most Hueys featured a 44-foot twin blade rotor.

No paratroopers

In Vietnam, the helicopter reigned supreme. Only one parachute drop was conducted during the entire war. The rest of the time, troops were predominantly ferried into enemy territory via helicopter. Nicknamed 'slicks' thanks to their lack of external armaments, the formations were so tight that the rotor blades of neighbouring helicopters often overlapped.

Vietnam's London Bus

Early UH-1s featured a short fuselage with cabin space for just six troops. Later UH-1B models stretched the fuselage and could seat 15 (or house six stretchers for wounded).

Semi-monocoque construction

Medic!

Initially, assault helicopters were used for medical evacuations. As the war continued, some Huey crews were trained in basic medical skills, and could be summoned with the 'Dustoff' radio call sign.

The first gunships

Without weapons, 'slick' Hueys were vulnerable. Some were fitted in the field with .30 cal machine guns or rocket pods to provide defensive fire. By 1963, the first factory-built UH-1 gunship, the UH-1C, arrived in Vietnam. Despite this, around 2,500 were lost during the conflict.

BRUCE CRANDALL

DOB: 17 FEBRUARY 1933 ✪ COLONEL ✪ US ARMY

Flew over 900 combat missions during the war

Bruce Crandall commanded the 1st Cavalry Division's Company A, 229th Assault Helicopter Battalion, and was involved in some of the most heroic acts of the war. Trained to fly both fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters, he was never far from the action. During the Battle of Ia Drang, he evacuated around 70 US soldiers, and supplied the remaining troops with ammo. Another major mission was Operation Masher, during which he braved intense enemy fire while rescuing 12 wounded soldiers. He earned many awards, like the Aviation & Space Writers Helicopter Heroism Award, the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry and the Medal of Honor for Valor.

60MM M2 LIGHT MORTAR

Raining down fire from above

Developed during World War II, the M2 steadily replaced the less efficient M19 as the standard mortar for the US Army. Copied from the designs of French engineer Edgar William Brandt, the weapon had a range of nearly 6,000 feet, and was capable of firing high-explosive white phosphorous and illuminating projectile rounds.

US Marines land 08.03.65

Supplying the South Vietnamese with arms and resources wasn't enough

The first combat troops to be dropped in Vietnam were the 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade, who were charged with defending the Danang airfield on 8 March 1965. The first major skirmish began on the 14 November in the Ia Drang Valley as the US forces engaged the NVA for the first time on the ground. Hundreds of GIs were lost and many more NVA. After the battle had ceased, US troop numbers reached their highest levels yet (200,000) as B-52s flew overhead. The American ground involvement had begun.

IA DRANG

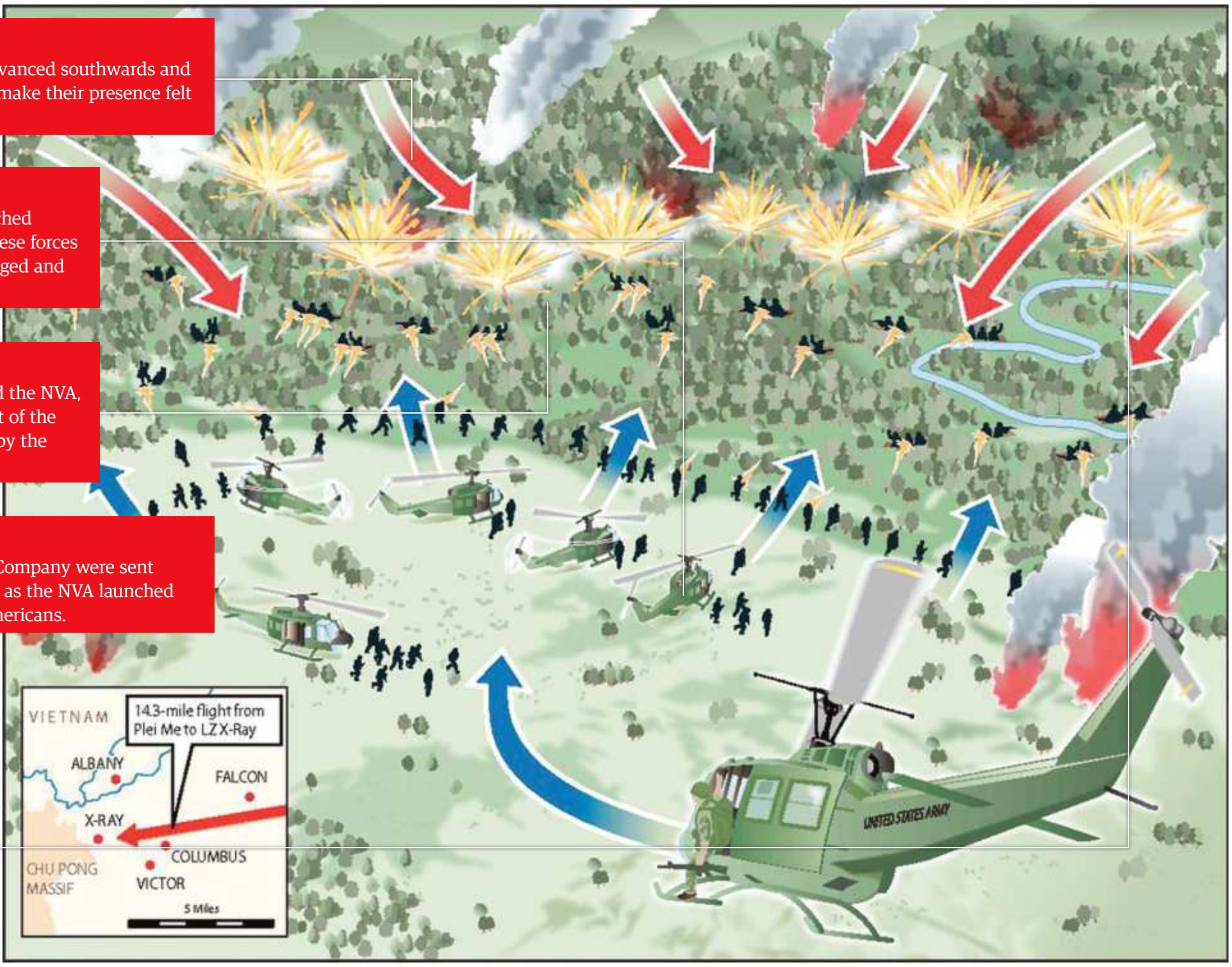
Confirmation that the war would not be over quickly for the United States

Vietnam saw some of the fiercest pitched battles in history. One of these was Ia Drang, the first real clash between the North Vietnamese and US armies. The NVA veered off the Ho Chi Minh trail in an attempt to escalate the main conflict, and the two sides engaged on the wooded slopes of Chu Pong Mountain on 14 November 1965. The NVA attack was repelled, with over 200 US soldiers killed, while North Vietnamese casualties numbered up to 1,000.

9K32 Strela-2

Potent anti-air weapon for over-the-shoulder use

With the threat of US air superiority, NVA troops relied heavily on these Soviet-gifted surface-to-air launchers. Also known as the Grail, the weapon's portability was its greatest advantage, as a user could appear and threaten low-flying aircraft seemingly out of nowhere.



Off the trail

Viet Cong and NVA forces advanced southwards and off the Ho Chi Minh path to make their presence felt to the arriving US forces.

Landing zones

The 1st Cavalry Division touched down. As the North Vietnamese forces marched in, US soldiers engaged and pursued them.

Encirclement

A second US Platoon pursued the NVA, but were cut off from the rest of the ground forces and encircled by the North Vietnamese.

Rescue operation

Reinforcements from Bravo Company were sent in on the evening of day two as the NVA launched overnight assaults on the Americans.

Fire from above

Napalm strikes pushed the NVA and Viet Cong back after five days of fighting. The NVA was buoyed by its successes against the US.

105MM M101A1 HOWITZER

Fire support dropped into place by helicopter

The 2.2 ton, 105mm M101 Howitzer first entered service in 1941 as the M2A2, seeing action throughout WWII and Korea before it became a mainstay of US firebases in Vietnam.

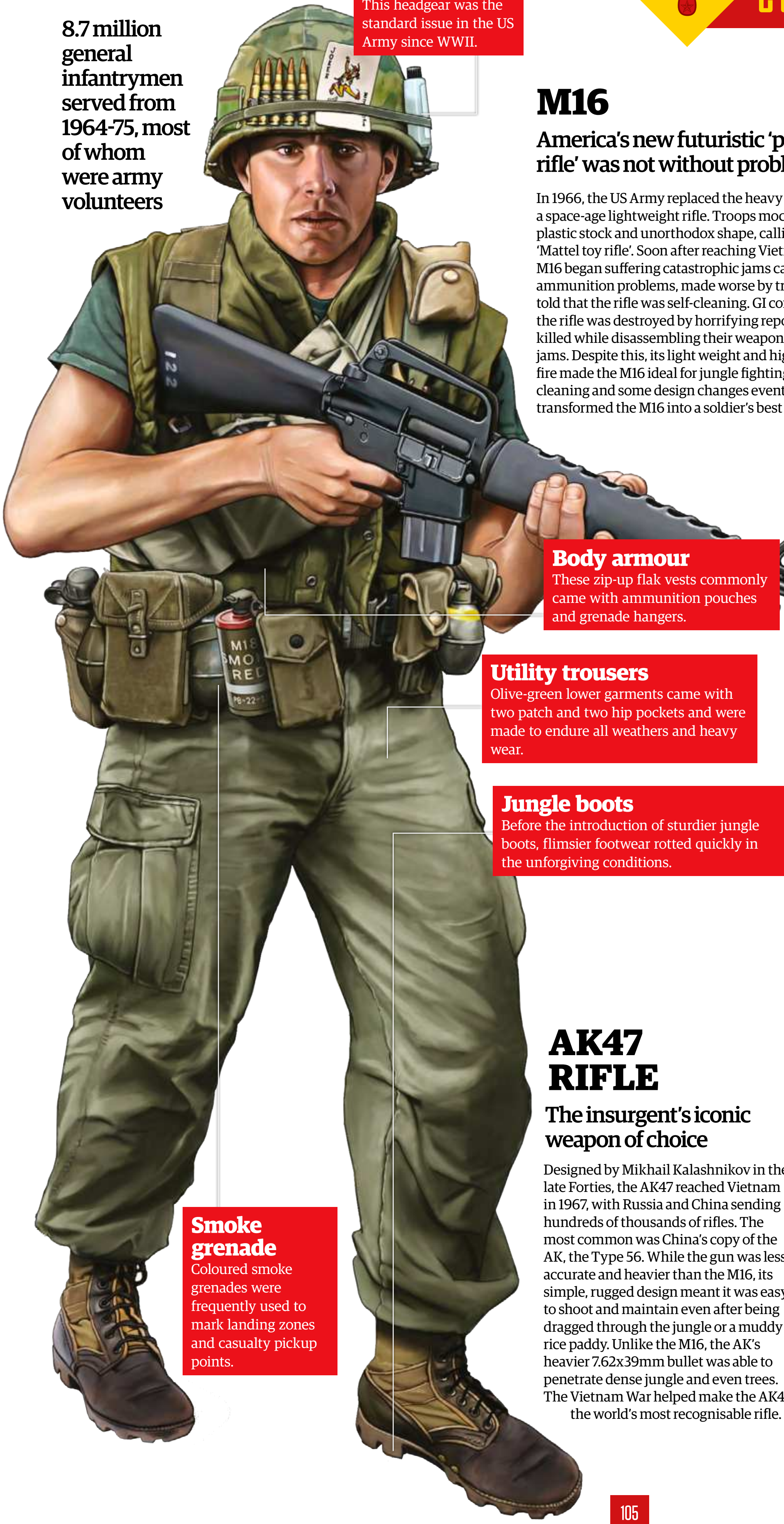
FLAMETHROWERS

The go-to weapon for burning out bunkers and bush

Used for everything from burning brush around firebases and landing zones, to destroying Vietnamese bunkers, flamethrowers were most commonly found mounted on special tanks and riverboats nicknamed 'Zippos'. Man-portable flamethrowers were rarely used, because the heavy tanks held only enough fuel for just nine seconds of burn time.

US ARMY GI

8.7 million general infantrymen served from 1964-75, most of whom were army volunteers



M1 helmet
This headgear was the standard issue in the US Army since WWII.

Body armour
These zip-up flak vests commonly came with ammunition pouches and grenade hangers.

Utility trousers
Olive-green lower garments came with two patch and two hip pockets and were made to endure all weathers and heavy wear.

Jungle boots
Before the introduction of sturdier jungle boots, flimsier footwear rotted quickly in the unforgiving conditions.

Smoke grenade
Coloured smoke grenades were frequently used to mark landing zones and casualty pickup points.

M16

America's new futuristic 'plastic rifle' was not without problems

In 1966, the US Army replaced the heavy M14 with a space-age lightweight rifle. Troops mocked its plastic stock and unorthodox shape, calling it the 'Mattel toy rifle'. Soon after reaching Vietnam, the M16 began suffering catastrophic jams caused by ammunition problems, made worse by troops being told that the rifle was self-cleaning. GI confidence in the rifle was destroyed by horrifying reports of men killed while disassembling their weapons to clear jams. Despite this, its light weight and high rate of fire made the M16 ideal for jungle fighting. Proper cleaning and some design changes eventually transformed the M16 into a soldier's best friend.

AK47 RIFLE

The insurgent's iconic weapon of choice

Designed by Mikhail Kalashnikov in the late Forties, the AK47 reached Vietnam in 1967, with Russia and China sending hundreds of thousands of rifles. The most common was China's copy of the AK, the Type 56. While the gun was less accurate and heavier than the M16, its simple, rugged design meant it was easy to shoot and maintain even after being dragged through the jungle or a muddy rice paddy. Unlike the M16, the AK's heavier 7.62x39mm bullet was able to penetrate dense jungle and even trees. The Vietnam War helped make the AK47 the world's most recognisable rifle.

COMMANDERS AND LEADERS

LE TRONG TAN

Chief of Staff and Deputy Minister of Defence of Vietnam

A major commander of the NVA and Communist forces, General Le Trong Tan led assaults on the cities of Hue and Da Nang in 1975. He was also the deputy commander in the Ho Chi Minh campaign in the latter stages of the Spring Offensive.

HO CHI MINH

President of North Vietnam

A veteran of the Indochina War, Ho was in poor health for most of the Vietnam War, and was more of a public figure than a governing one. He was instrumental in planning the Tet Offensive, and remained influential until his death in 1969.

EARLE WHEELER

US Army General & Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff

A surprising choice for a general, Wheeler was known for pumping extra troops into combat whenever requested. He favoured heavy-handed tactics, and presided over the heaviest stages of US involvement in the war. He also pioneered the first acts of 'Vietnamisation'.

RICHARD NIXON

US President

Coming into power at a time of huge anti-war sentiment, Nixon planned to withdraw US forces in Vietnam as rapidly as possible. This was easier said than done, and the US remained in 'Nam as they tried to incorporate the 'Vietnamisation' policy.

My Lai massacre 16.03.68

The brutal murdering of 500 civilians in the village of My Lai

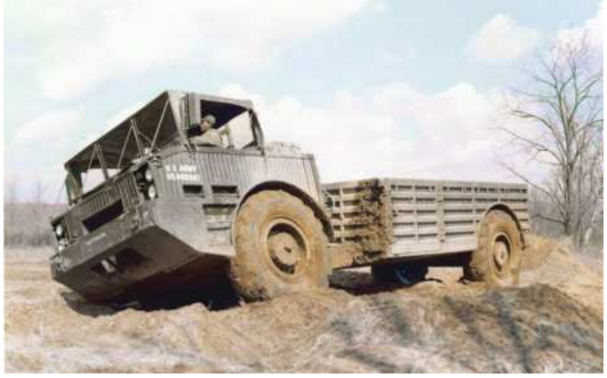
The guerrilla warfare in Vietnam was so secretive that almost anyone could be in alliance with the Viet Cong. By 16 March 1968, the morale of the US forces was at a low ebb. Task Force Barker was assigned to seek out Viet Cong members in the small village of My Lai, and despite reports stating that very few were of fighting age, the troops opened fire on the residents of the village. The event was a turning point in opinion back in the US, and Lieutenant William Calley was charged for war crimes for his part in the massacre.

M520 GOER

An amphibious 4x4 that could go anywhere, helping to supply US troops in South Vietnam

The Caterpillar-built prototype M520 GOERs were pressed into active service in 1966, where they quickly became the most popular resupplying vehicle. The M520 had no suspension, instead relying on its tyres for springing the vehicle.

What's more, the seams between the GOER's external steel frame and sides were watertight, making it amphibious. Despite its success, it wasn't until 1972 that a production order was placed, seeing 812 sent to Vietnam.



Hugh Thompson Jr

This true hero stood against the tide during one of the darkest events in the war

DOB: 15 APRIL 1943 ✪ MAJOR ✪ US ARMY

The My Lai Massacre of 16 March 1968 was one of the war's darkest moments, but if it wasn't for Hugh Thompson and his helicopter crew, it would have been a lot bleaker. While the tragedy was unfolding, Larry Colburn, Glenn Andreotta and Hugh Thompson attempted to stop the massacre. Using their helicopter to block the US troops, Thompson ordered the vehicle's machine guns to be trained on American GIs to halt the slaughter. After this, they flew around rescuing Vietnamese from ditches and bunkers. Thompson and his crew initially had a mixed reception upon returning home, but received the Soldier's Medal in 1998 for their heroic act.

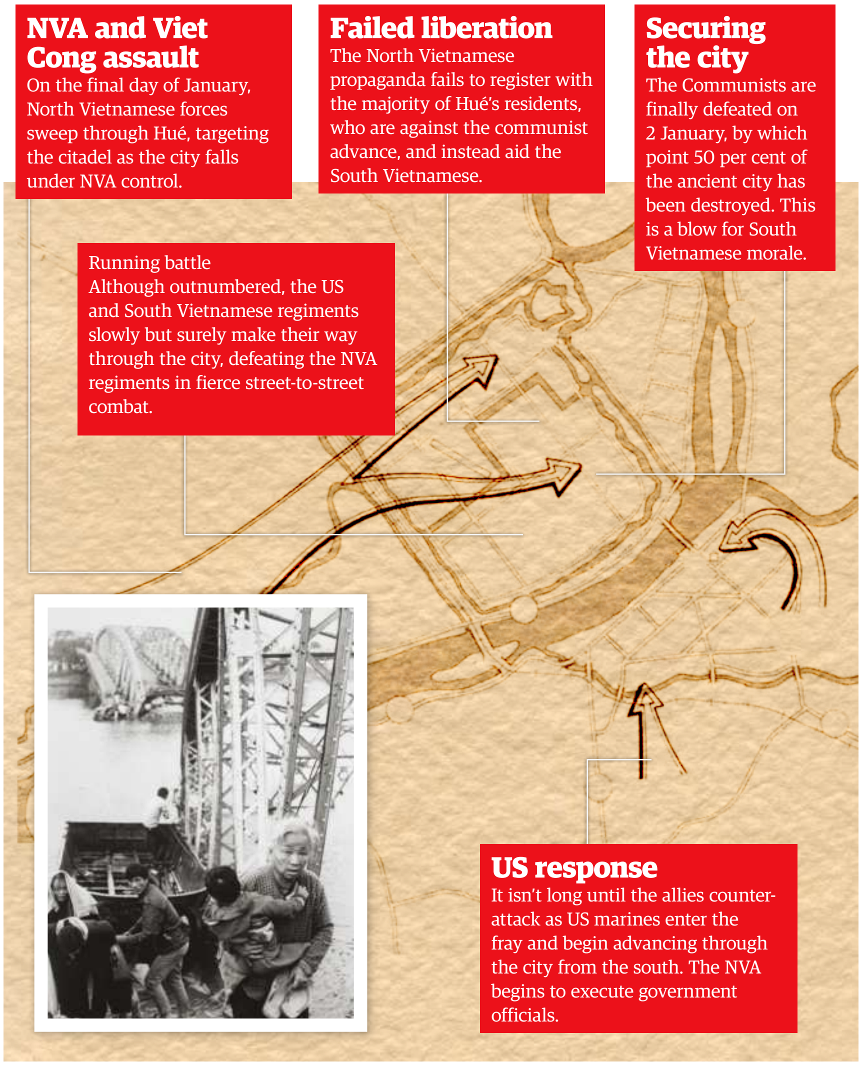
SIEGE OF HUÉ

The ancient capital city had been spared damage until January 1968

Despite the war raging relentlessly around it, the ancient city of Hué had barely been touched until January 1968, when 10,000 NVA and Viet Cong troops rolled into town.

2,500 US soldiers crossed the river from the south to help stop the communist advance, before the NVA could round up and kill leading South Vietnamese government officials and destroy the citadel.

The battle would become one of the largest US urban conflicts of all time. A tactical victory for the US, the gory images seen around the world greatly reduced Western support for the war.



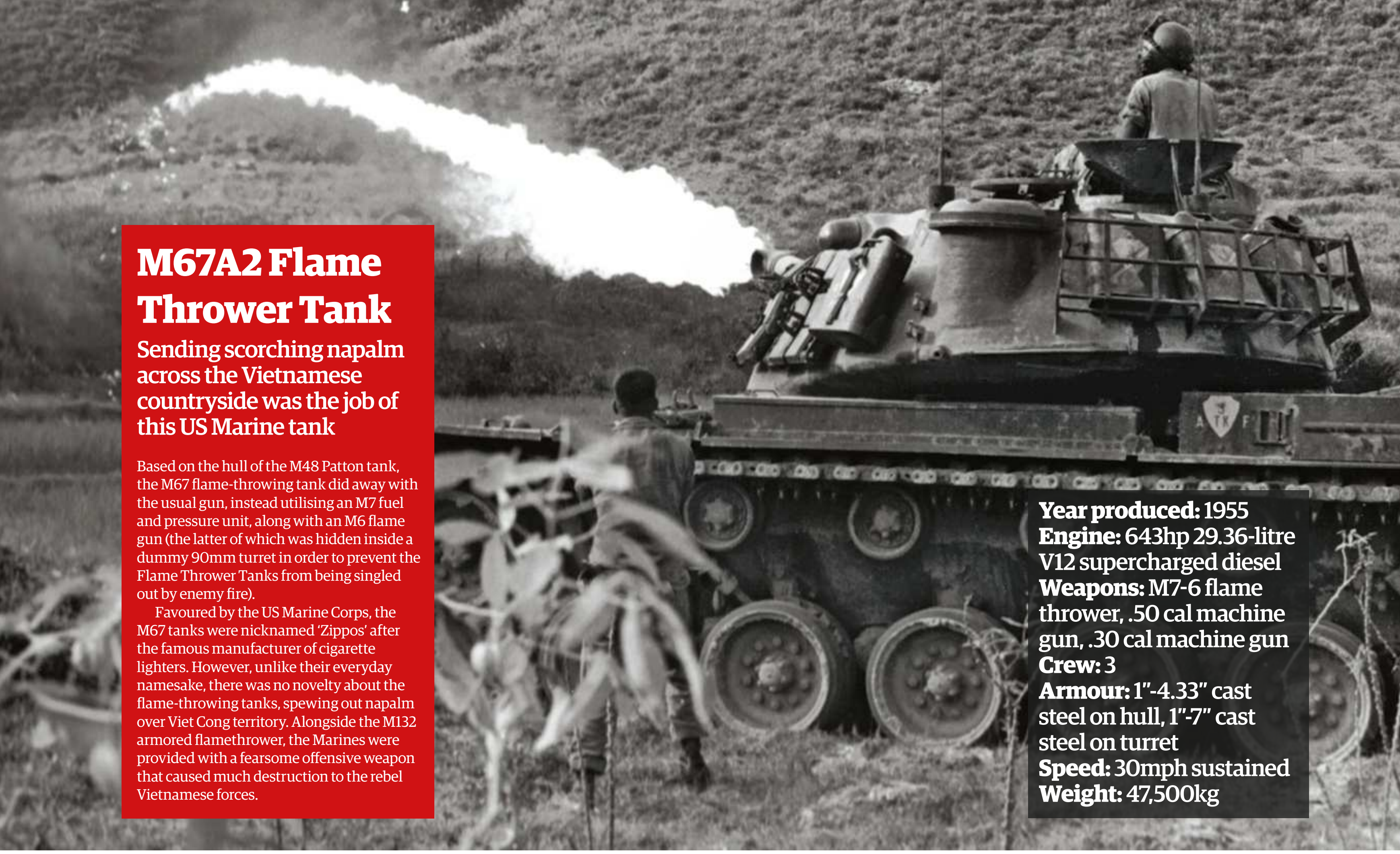
NVA and Viet Cong assault
On the final day of January, North Vietnamese forces sweep through Hué, targeting the citadel as the city falls under NVA control.

Failed liberation
The North Vietnamese propaganda fails to register with the majority of Hué's residents, who are against the communist advance, and instead aid the South Vietnamese.

Securing the city
The Communists are finally defeated on 2 January, by which point 50 per cent of the ancient city has been destroyed. This is a blow for South Vietnamese morale.

Running battle
Although outnumbered, the US and South Vietnamese regiments slowly but surely make their way through the city, defeating the NVA regiments in fierce street-to-street combat.

US response
It isn't long until the allies counter-attack as US marines enter the fray and begin advancing through the city from the south. The NVA begins to execute government officials.



M67A2 Flame Thrower Tank

Sending scorching napalm across the Vietnamese countryside was the job of this US Marine tank

Based on the hull of the M48 Patton tank, the M67 flame-throwing tank did away with the usual gun, instead utilising an M7 fuel and pressure unit, along with an M6 flame gun (the latter of which was hidden inside a dummy 90mm turret in order to prevent the Flame Thrower Tanks from being singled out by enemy fire).

Favoured by the US Marine Corps, the M67 tanks were nicknamed 'Zippos' after the famous manufacturer of cigarette lighters. However, unlike their everyday namesake, there was no novelty about the flame-throwing tanks, spewing out napalm over Viet Cong territory. Alongside the M132 armored flamethrower, the Marines were provided with a fearsome offensive weapon that caused much destruction to the rebel Vietnamese forces.

Year produced: 1955
Engine: 643hp 29.36-litre V12 supercharged diesel
Weapons: M7-6 flame thrower, .50 cal machine gun, .30 cal machine gun
Crew: 3
Armour: 1"-4.33" cast steel on hull, 1"-7" cast steel on turret
Speed: 30mph sustained
Weight: 47,500kg

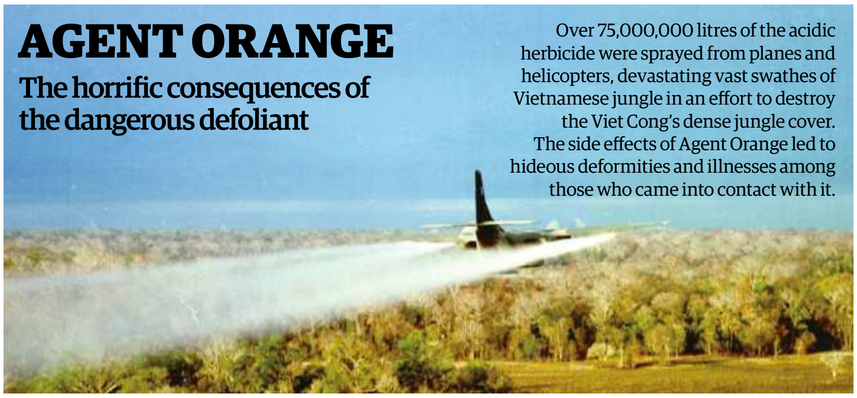
NAPALM

Almost 400,000 tons of Napalm were dropped during the war

Developed during WWII, napalm was first used in Vietnam by the French. A mix of petrol and thickening gel, napalm burns at 1,000°C and can cover up to 2,000m when dropped from the air. News reports of Vietnamese civilians accidentally hit by napalm during air attacks horrified the US public.

AGENT ORANGE

The horrific consequences of the dangerous defoliant



Over 75,000,000 litres of the acidic herbicide were sprayed from planes and helicopters, devastating vast swathes of Vietnamese jungle in an effort to destroy the Viet Cong's dense jungle cover. The side effects of Agent Orange led to hideous deformities and illnesses among those who came into contact with it.

SOVIET MIG-17 VS USAF F-4 PHANTOM II

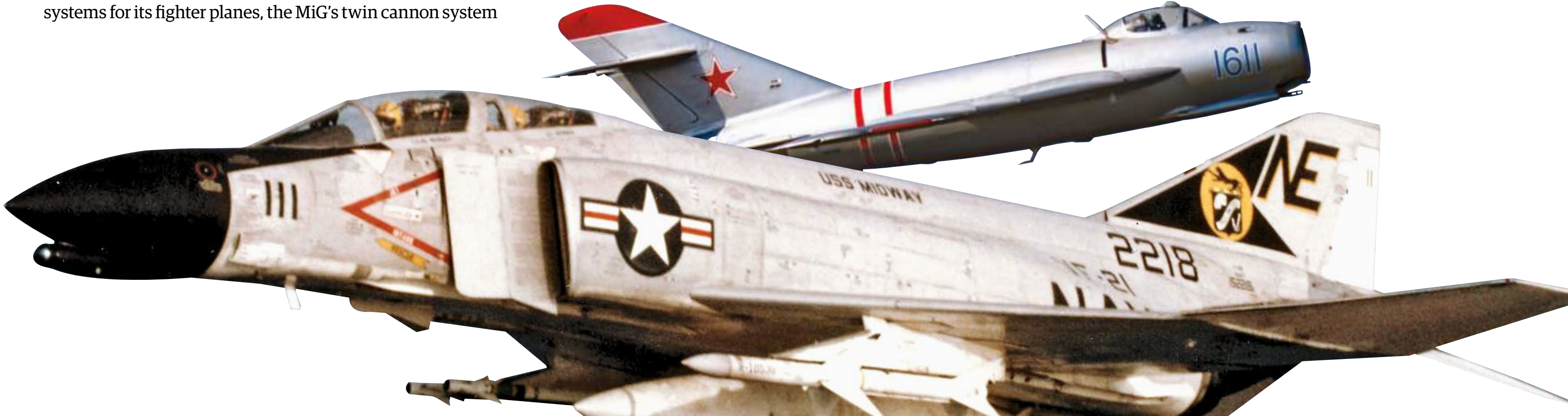
Soviet and American aeronautic technology clashed In the battle for Vietnamese air superiority

Despite US Air Force pilots being engaged in aerial combat almost continuously since the end of WWII, USAF could only manage a 2:1 kill ratio against the NVAF's MiG-17 and MiG-21 fleet.

The MiG-17 was the tightest turning jet fighter of its day. Despite its thin delta wings, it could sustain turns of up to 8G. While the US began developing air-to-air missile systems for its fighter planes, the MiG's twin cannon system made it a better bet in close aerial dogfights, accounting for 26 US aircraft from 1965-72.

At the time, The F-4 Phantom II was the West's most prolific fighter craft. Serving under the US Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps, the jet had already set speed and altitude records by the outbreak of the war. A highly versatile plane, it was capable of participating in intercept and reconnaissance missions.

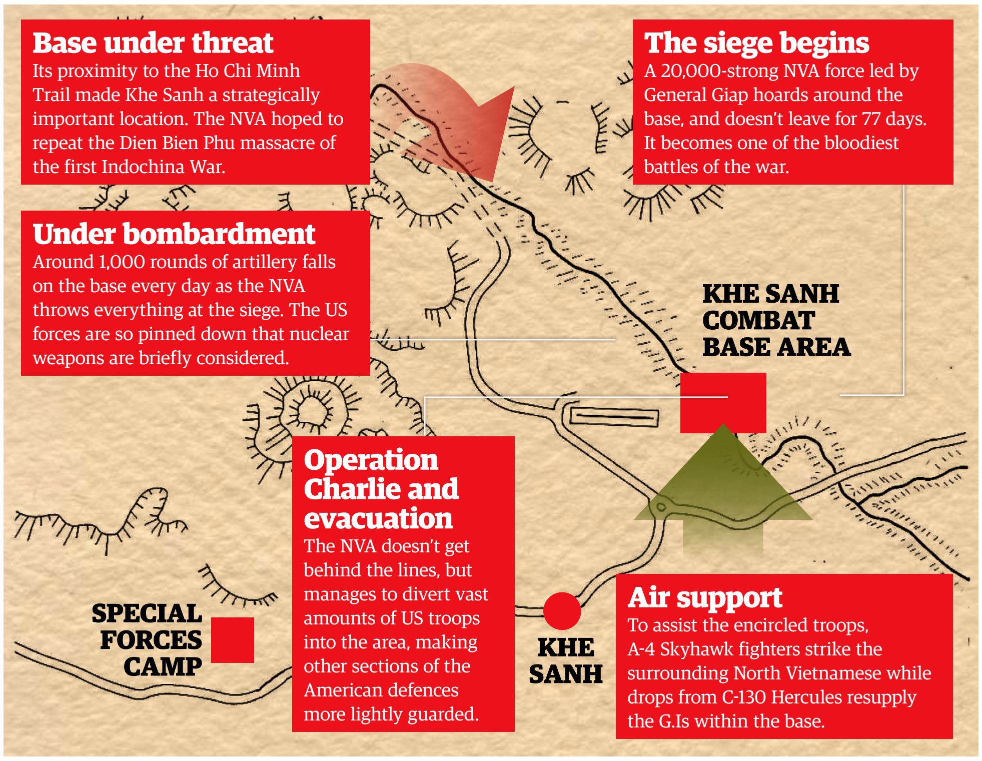
The F-4G 'Wild Weasel' variant was developed by the US Air Force to find and destroy enemy radar using air-to-surface missiles, which proved highly effective against NVA installations.



Tet Offensive 30.01.68

The turning point of the war that kick-started the US withdrawal

This surprise attack in January 1968 saw 70,000 NVA and Viet Cong troops swarm into over 100 cities, towns and military bases in South Vietnam. Although the attack was eventually repelled, the show of military strength shocked the South Vietnamese and US military so much that withdrawal talks began shortly after. The toughest fighting was in Hue, where US air strikes bombarded the citadel, which had been taken by the NVA. The Offensive lasted seven months until the NVA and Viet Cong were forced to retreat, with losses of around 37,000 men. It was a huge cost to life, but an important strategic victory.



Base under threat
Its proximity to the Ho Chi Minh Trail made Khe Sanh a strategically important location. The NVA hoped to repeat the Dien Bien Phu massacre of the first Indochina War.

The siege begins
A 20,000-strong NVA force led by General Giap hoards around the base, and doesn't leave for 77 days. It becomes one of the bloodiest battles of the war.

Under bombardment
Around 1,000 rounds of artillery falls on the base every day as the NVA throws everything at the siege. The US forces are so pinned down that nuclear weapons are briefly considered.

Operation Charlie and evacuation
The NVA doesn't get behind the lines, but manages to divert vast amounts of US troops into the area, making other sections of the American defences more lightly guarded.

Air support
To assist the encircled troops, A-4 Skyhawk fighters strike the surrounding North Vietnamese while drops from C-130 Hercules resupply the G.Is within the base.

SIEGE OF KHE SANH

An important US base, Khe Sanh bore the brunt of the Tet Offensive

Beginning on 21 January 1968, this siege lasted six months as the NVA tested the US defences to the limit. With 20,000 men surrounding Khe Sanh, the 6,000 US soldiers and their South Vietnamese allies put up a strong defence, but had to be rescued by air support. 80,000 tons of bombs were dropped on the attackers, who were forced to retreat after losing up to 15,000 men, but earned a strategic victory in the process.

"I cannot describe in words how frightening it was"

Former US Marine Ken Rodgers witnessed the siege of Khe Sanh and the Tet Offensive

Can you describe your experiences of the siege of Khe Sanh to us?
Little food, little water. We were hungry, dirty and frightened. We were pounded with all sorts of incoming, from sniper fire to 152mm artillery. We lost a lot of men. Over 60 KIA in Bravo Company alone. I cannot describe in words how frightening it was. A lot of times, in war, one has five and ten minute encounters with the enemy and those encounters scare you. But only a little. Khe Sanh was about fear twenty-four-hours a day. Fear piled on top of fear, the levels so numerous and varied they almost defy description.

Were you under constant bombardment?
As I recall it, we were under almost constant bombardment. I left Khe Sanh, I think, on 4/2/68. I went down to one of the helicopter pads and waited what seemed like all day before I got on a Chinook and flew out for the coast and the Marine base at Dong Ha. I remember the crew chief of the Chinook telling me to sit down but I wouldn't. I stood up because I was afraid ground fire from the NVA would come through the bottom of the hull and kill me.

How and when did you originally hear of the oncoming Tet Offensive?
I first heard about the Tet Offensive on Armed Forces Radio the day it happened. We got almost all our news and entertainment that way, unless we listened to Hanoi Hannah. As the Tet Offensive unfolded, we were trapped inside Khe Sanh and we thought the end of the world for us was at hand and just not us personally, but for the American war effort. I suspect that Khe Sanh and Tet were illustrations to the American public that the war effort was a waste of time, humanity and money and they, over the next few years, determined to pull their support for military action.

What role did you then play in the waves of attacks that followed?
At the onset of Tet nothing much changed at Khe Sanh except the ferocity of the attacks increased, more incoming, the NVA attacking outposts outside the combat base itself. They introduced their tank units and stormed some Army Special Forces installations and tried to take some Marine positions, too.

Was the amount and ferocity of the attacks a shock to you? What tactics did you use in response?
Full scale war is a shock and by its nature is ferocious. At Khe Sanh we dug deep, stayed low and waited for the chance to get outside the wire that surrounded our positions and attack, attack, attack.

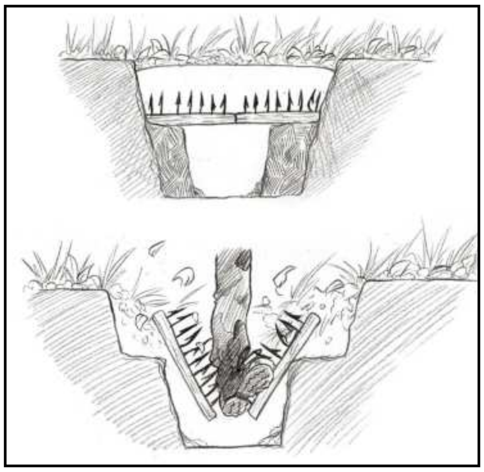
Did you receive any wounds?
On 30 March 1968 I was on an assault of a hill southeast of Khe Sanh Combat Base (Known as the Payback Patrol) and was hit in the head with shrapnel from a mortar. Later that day I was hit in the face with white phosphorus from a booby trap.

NGUYEN HUY HIEU

A key player in the NVA

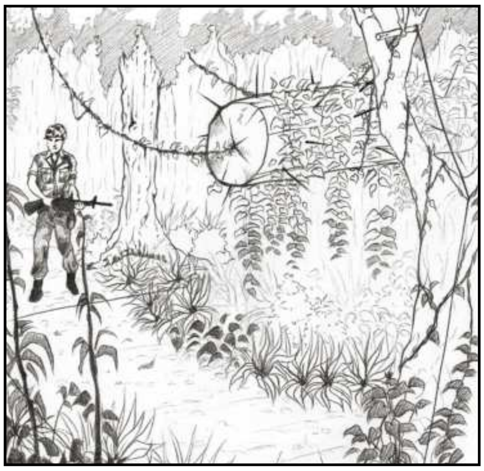
DOB: 1947 ✪ REGIMENT COMMANDER ✪ NVA

Born in Nam Dinh in North Vietnam, Nguyen Huy Hieu joined the military at 18. During the war, he progressed rapidly through the ranks, and became one of the youngest captains in the NVA. One of his most notable conflicts was the 1968 Battle of Quang Tri, where the NVA and Viet Cong were defeated while trying to occupy the city of Quang Tri. His service didn't go unnoticed by the North Vietnamese hierarchy, who awarded him the title of Commander of the regiment in 1973. After the war, he was given the title 'Hero of the People's Armed Forces', along with five Liberation Distinguished Service Medals.



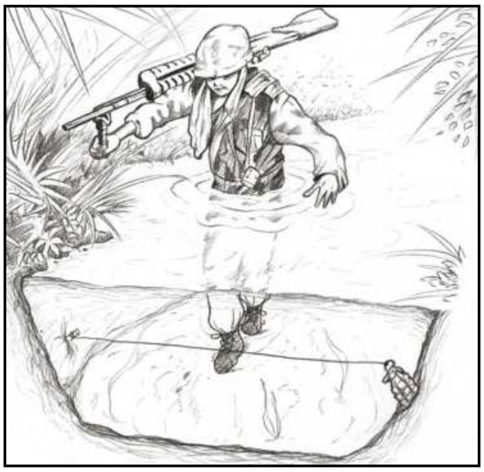
PANJI TRAP

Hidden inconspicuously inside camouflaged holes, these traps were ideal for catching unsuspecting US GIs off guard. These hidden jungle threats could slow a march down, as they were almost impossible to locate. If you were unlucky enough to get caught in one, a bamboo spike or nail plunging through your foot would make you instantly combat ineffective.



MACE TRAP

What the US had in firepower the Viet Cong made up for with ingenuity. The mace trap was a simple three-metre (ten-foot) log studded with sharp bamboo spikes. It would be triggered by a concealed trip wire on the forest floor, and was used in a similar role to the Panji trap. These mace traps were silent, but could maim and even kill once activated.



GRENADE TRAP

Less widespread than other traps due to the availability of explosives, this was nonetheless an effective trap. The grenade could be hidden in water, under foliage or up in the treetops. Once again using the element of surprise, a small tug on the tripwire would dislodge the safety pin and incapacitate a group of enemy soldiers in one blast.

Bicycle

The Viet Cong moved supplies via pedal power

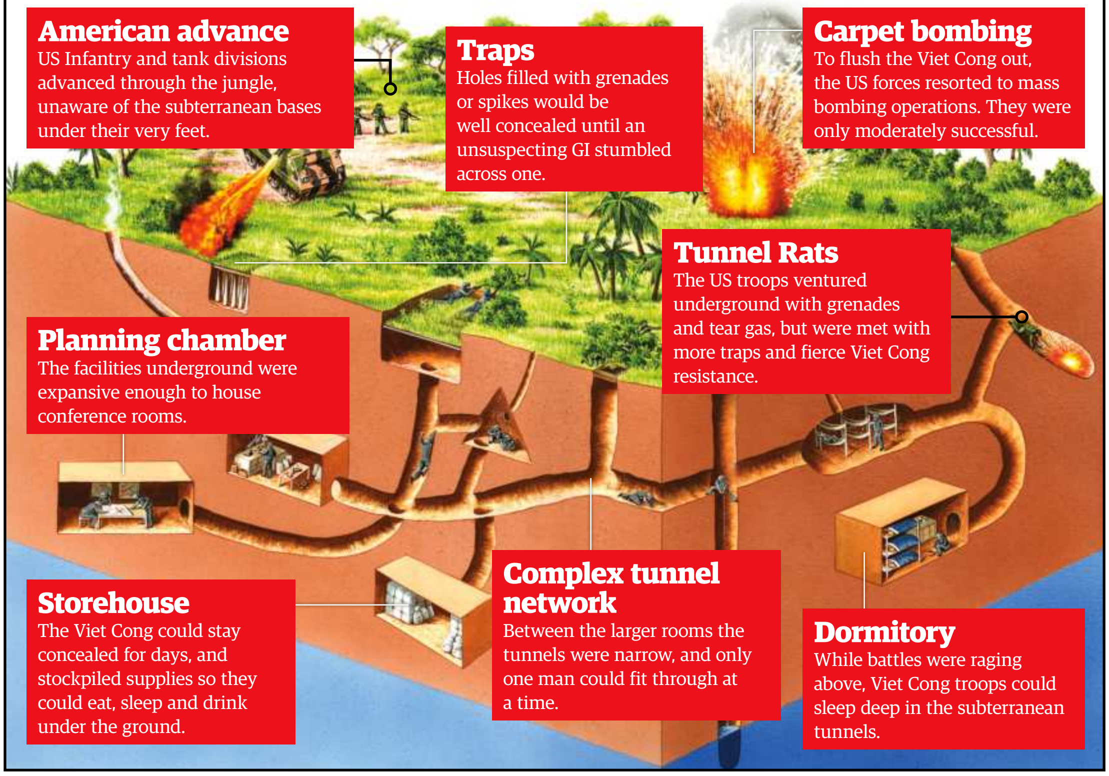
In contrast to the technological might of the US, one of the key vehicles for the North Vietnamese troops was the humble bicycle.

Capable of carrying up to 180kg of supplies, the Viet Cong used their bikes to transport rice, guns and other essential goods. They proved especially useful in ferrying items along the Ho Chi Minh Trail, and were an integral part of the Tet Offensive.

Fully laden, the bicycles were impossible to ride. Instead, they were pushed at pedestrian pace. However, easy to repair and simple to camouflage, they were rarely hit by US attacks. Harrison Salisbury, a New York Times reporter who had spent time in Hanoi, remarked: "I literally believe that without bikes they'd have to get out of the war."

THE CU CHI TUNNELS

The Viet Cong constructed huge tunnel networks to strike infantry from below



American advance
US Infantry and tank divisions advanced through the jungle, unaware of the subterranean bases under their very feet.

Traps
Holes filled with grenades or spikes would be well concealed until an unsuspecting GI stumbled across one.

Carpet bombing
To flush the Viet Cong out, the US forces resorted to mass bombing operations. They were only moderately successful.

Tunnel Rats
The US troops ventured underground with grenades and tear gas, but were met with more traps and fierce Viet Cong resistance.

Planning chamber
The facilities underground were expansive enough to house conference rooms.

Storehouse
The Viet Cong could stay concealed for days, and stockpiled supplies so they could eat, sleep and drink under the ground.

Complex tunnel network
Between the larger rooms the tunnels were narrow, and only one man could fit through at a time.

Dormitory
While battles were raging above, Viet Cong troops could sleep deep in the subterranean tunnels.

VO NGUYEN GIAP

The Commander in Chief of the Vietminh was key to fighting the US campaign

DOB: 25 AUGUST 1911
✪ COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF
✪ VIETMINH

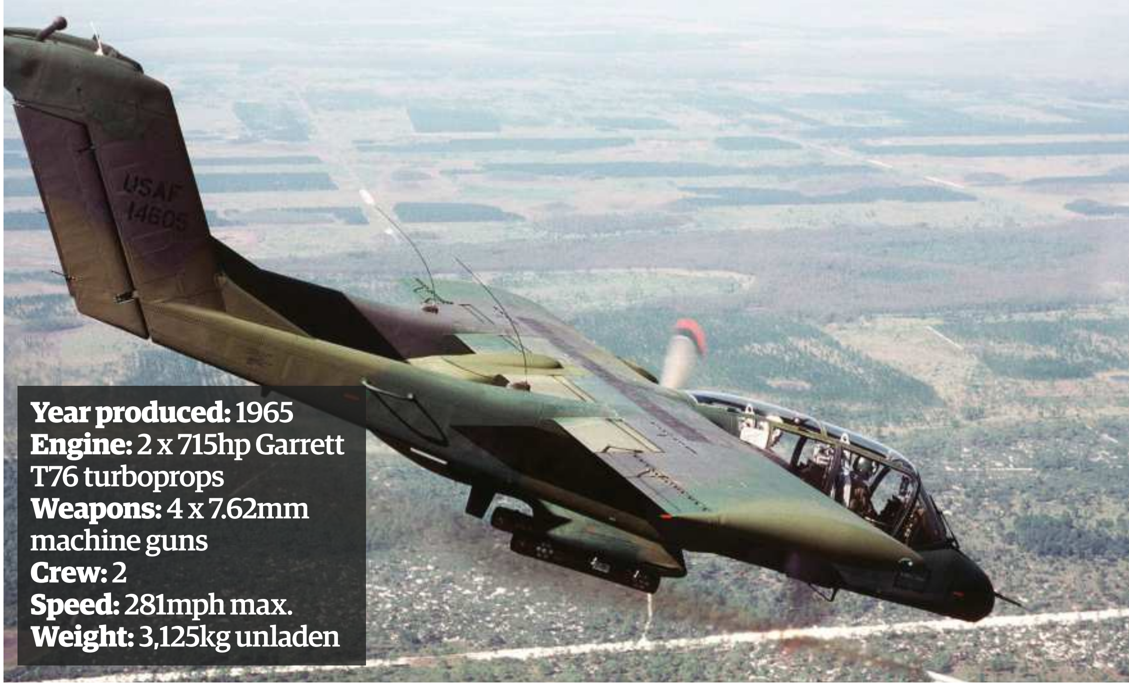
A veteran of World War II and the Indochina War, the 'Red Napoleon' was the leader of the Communist Vietminh, or League for the Independence of Vietnam, and the country's Defence Minister. A great military tactician, he sent frequent aid to the Viet Cong, and is credited with organising the Tet Offensive.

After the US withdrawal, Giap helped mastermind the 1975 fall of Saigon. Internal power struggles in the North Vietnamese hierarchy has reduced Giap's depiction in modern Vietnam. In modern texts, much of the glory of victory is credited to General Văn Tiên Dũng rather than Giap.

Ken Rodgers, photo courtesy of Kevin Martini-Fuller.

NORTH AMERICAN ROCKWELL OV-10 BRONCO

An unusual warbird designed to do it all in the skies above Vietnam



Year produced: 1965
Engine: 2 x 715hp Garrett T76 turboprops
Weapons: 4 x 7.62mm machine guns
Crew: 2
Speed: 281mph max.
Weight: 3,125kg unladen

A large cockpit, seating pilot and co-pilot in tandem, with wings mounted atop the fuselage and twin booms with interconnecting stabiliser, North American Rockwell's OV-10 Bronco certainly cut a distinctive shape in the air.

Designed and tested in the early Sixties with the counter-insurgency combat of Vietnam in mind, the OV-10 was capable of short take-offs and landings, ideal for use from larger amphibious assault ships or from unprepared airfields. It could also be started without ground equipment and, if needed, run on automotive petrol with little discernable loss of performance.

Capable of carrying 1,450kg of cargo, the OV-10 was a versatile machine after its introduction into Vietnam in 1969, most at home during forward air control and reconnaissance missions. However, despite aiding in numerous air strikes, the Bronco wasn't without its problems. 81 OV-10 Broncos were lost in Vietnam, with a low top speed making it an easy target for enemy fighters, and its slow climb rate causing some US pilots to crash into the hilly terrain.

ATC 'MONITOR' BOAT

Patrolling the rivers was entrusted to converted landing craft

Inspired by its French counterparts' actions during the First Indochina War, the US Navy and Army formed the Mobile Riverine Force to combat Viet Cong forces in the Mekong Delta, predominantly using Armoured Troop Carriers (ATCs) to ferry up to 40 soldiers and launch river-based assaults in water five feet or deeper.

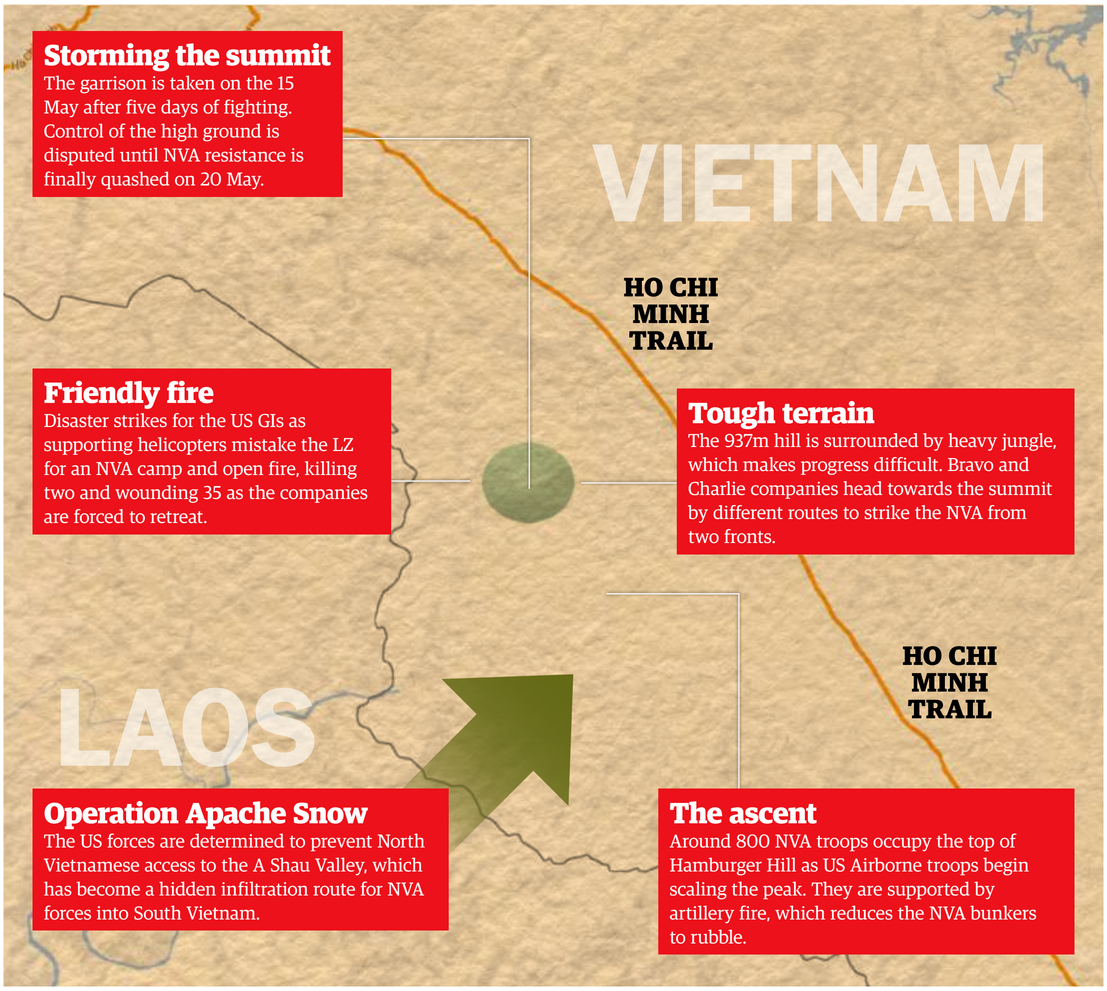
The ATCs were based on the Fifties LCM-6 landing craft design, using quarter-inch hardened steel armour plating to protect the superstructure and a distinctive bow ramp used for deploying troops and loading supplies. In 61-foot 'Monitor' form, the ATC boat was transformed into a floating artillery platform, adding either a 81mm mortar or a 105mm Howitzer to the usual ATC armaments.

One of the finest moments for the ATCs in Vietnam was during Operation Game Warden on 18 December 1965. Intending to prevent the Viet Cong from accessing the vital supplies along the Mekong Delta, US forces launched a rapid surprise attack at a number of small enemy ports, destroying much of the Viet Cong fleet stationed there.

HAMBURGER HILL

US forces attempt to take the A Shau Valley, an important NVA route to South Vietnam

Operation Apache Snow was designed to restrict the North Vietnamese advance southwards. The valley on the border with Laos had become littered with NVA bases, and the Ap Bia Mountain – or Hamburger Hill – was one of the major centres. 1,800 US and South Vietnamese troops managed to defeat 800 NVA soldiers after a long, drawn-out battle where the heavy US infantry struggled in the thick undergrowth of the hill's slopes. The battle is known for various friendly fire incidents and a hollow US victory that many back home saw as a senseless battle in a senseless war.



Storming the summit
The garrison is taken on the 15 May after five days of fighting. Control of the high ground is disputed until NVA resistance is finally quashed on 20 May.

Friendly fire
Disaster strikes for the US GIs as supporting helicopters mistake the LZ for an NVA camp and open fire, killing two and wounding 35 as the companies are forced to retreat.

Tough terrain
The 937m hill is surrounded by heavy jungle, which makes progress difficult. Bravo and Charlie companies head towards the summit by different routes to strike the NVA from two fronts.

Operation Apache Snow
The US forces are determined to prevent North Vietnamese access to the A Shau Valley, which has become a hidden infiltration route for NVA forces into South Vietnam.

The ascent
Around 800 NVA troops occupy the top of Hamburger Hill as US Airborne troops begin scaling the peak. They are supported by artillery fire, which reduces the NVA bunkers to rubble.

NAVY SEAL WEAPONS

CARL GUSTAV M/45

The legendary 'Swedish-K' favoured by US Special Forces in Vietnam

Developed by neutral Sweden during WWII, the rugged M/45 became extremely popular with CIA operators and US Navy SEALs in Vietnam. The 1966 Swedish arms embargo ended export of the M/45 to the US. This led Smith & Wesson to produce the M76, an unashamed direct copy of the 'Swedish-K'.

KA-BAR

The utilitarian combat knife carried by thousands of US servicemen

Hanging from the belt of most US servicemen in Vietnam, the Ka-Bar, first adopted in 1942, was invaluable. It was used for everything from probing for mines to opening C-rations.

S&W MODEL 39

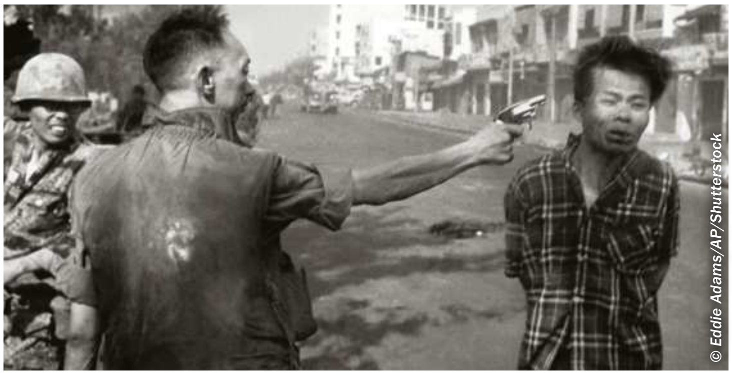
A fast-firing 9mm favourite

Smith & Wesson's first modern automatic pistol was used by the Navy SEALs during covert missions, a model adapted with a sound suppressor was nicknamed the 'Hush Puppy'.

NGUYEN NGOC LOAN

DOB: 11 DECEMBER 1930
✪ NATIONAL POLICE COMMANDER
✪ SOUTH VIETNAMESE

The man behind one of the war's most infamous was South Vietnam's brutal chief of police



© Eddie Adams/AP/Shutterstock

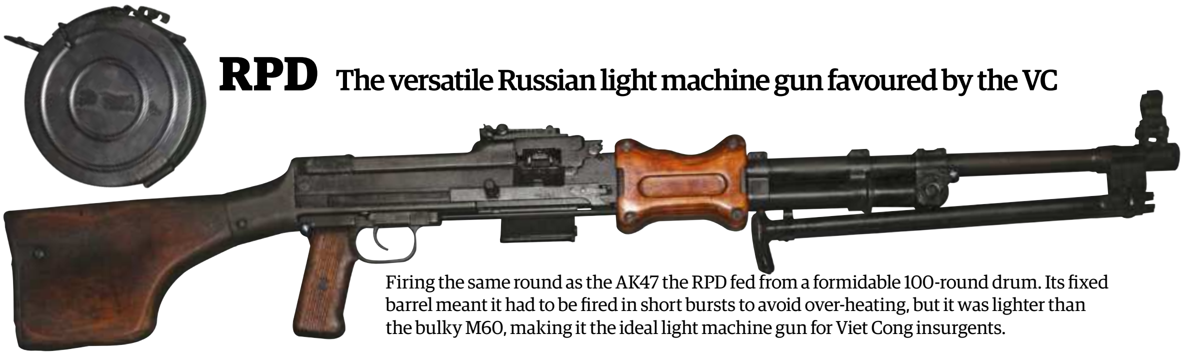
Nguyen Ngoc Loan was a staunch South Vietnamese nationalist, and led the national police force against the Viet Cong. He is remembered for his irrational rages and bad temper, as well as his vehement insistence that only local authorities could arrest and detain South Vietnamese citizens. Though unpopular with the American forces, he was an efficient police commander who performed his job competently.

However, his life changed on 1 February 1968 with his role in perhaps the most iconic image of the war, when he shot Viet Cong prisoner Nguyen Van Lem in cold blood after his deputy hesitated to do so. The incident helped spark negative public opinion against the war as an Associated Press photographer caught the full anguish on the victim's face in the photo. Loan had reason to use force (Lem was the captain of a Viet Cong death squad who had been targeting the families of the South Vietnam Police), but the shooting struck a nerve worldwide.

Loan eventually escaped on a plane at the fall of Saigon, and lived the rest of his life selling pizza in Washington DC.

RPD

The versatile Russian light machine gun favoured by the VC

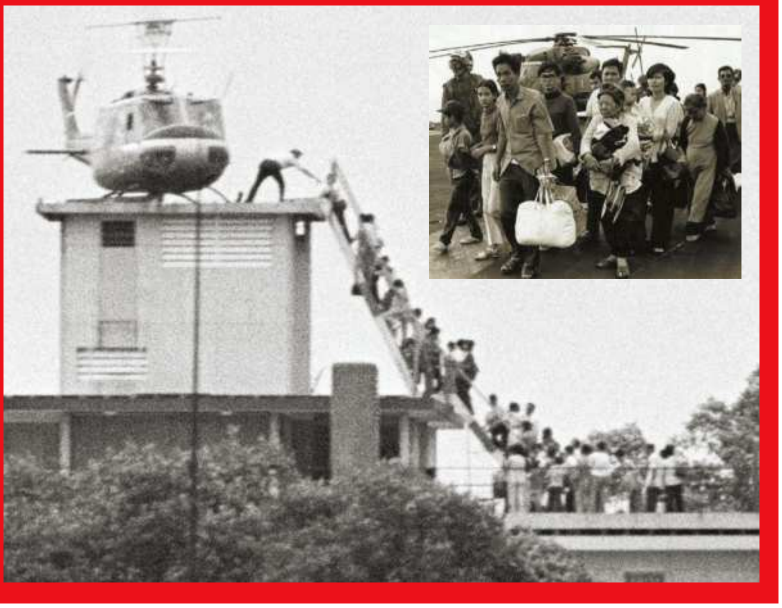


Firing the same round as the AK47 the RPD fed from a formidable 100-round drum. Its fixed barrel meant it had to be fired in short bursts to avoid over-heating, but it was lighter than the bulky M60, making it the ideal light machine gun for Viet Cong insurgents.

FALL OF SAIGON 30.04.75

Communist forces advance unopposed into the South Vietnamese capital

In seven short weeks in 1975, the communist forces swept south towards the capital of the South and their ultimate goal, Saigon. With Vietnamisation a failure, the South Vietnamese army was in disarray as the gates of Saigon were threatened for the first time in ten years. The city fell on 30 April as NVA tanks rolled through the streets with only minimal resistance from the scattered Southern forces. By this time the US embassy had safely been evacuated, and President Thieu had already fled to Taiwan. Saigon was renamed 'Ho Chi Minh City', and the entire country of Vietnam now belonged to the communist government.



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THE SINO-SOVIET SPLIT

While everyone focused on the power struggle between the United States and the USSR, an even more bitter conflict was playing out between the USSR and China…

On 2 March 1969, the Strategic Missile Forces went to high alert – their nuclear warheads ready to be loosed at targets 1,600 kilometres (1,000 miles) away in less than 15 minutes.

On the banks of a frozen river, opposing soldiers of two nuclear powers bled to death in the snow, as a cold war that Kennedy didn't fight and Reagan wouldn't win turned hot.

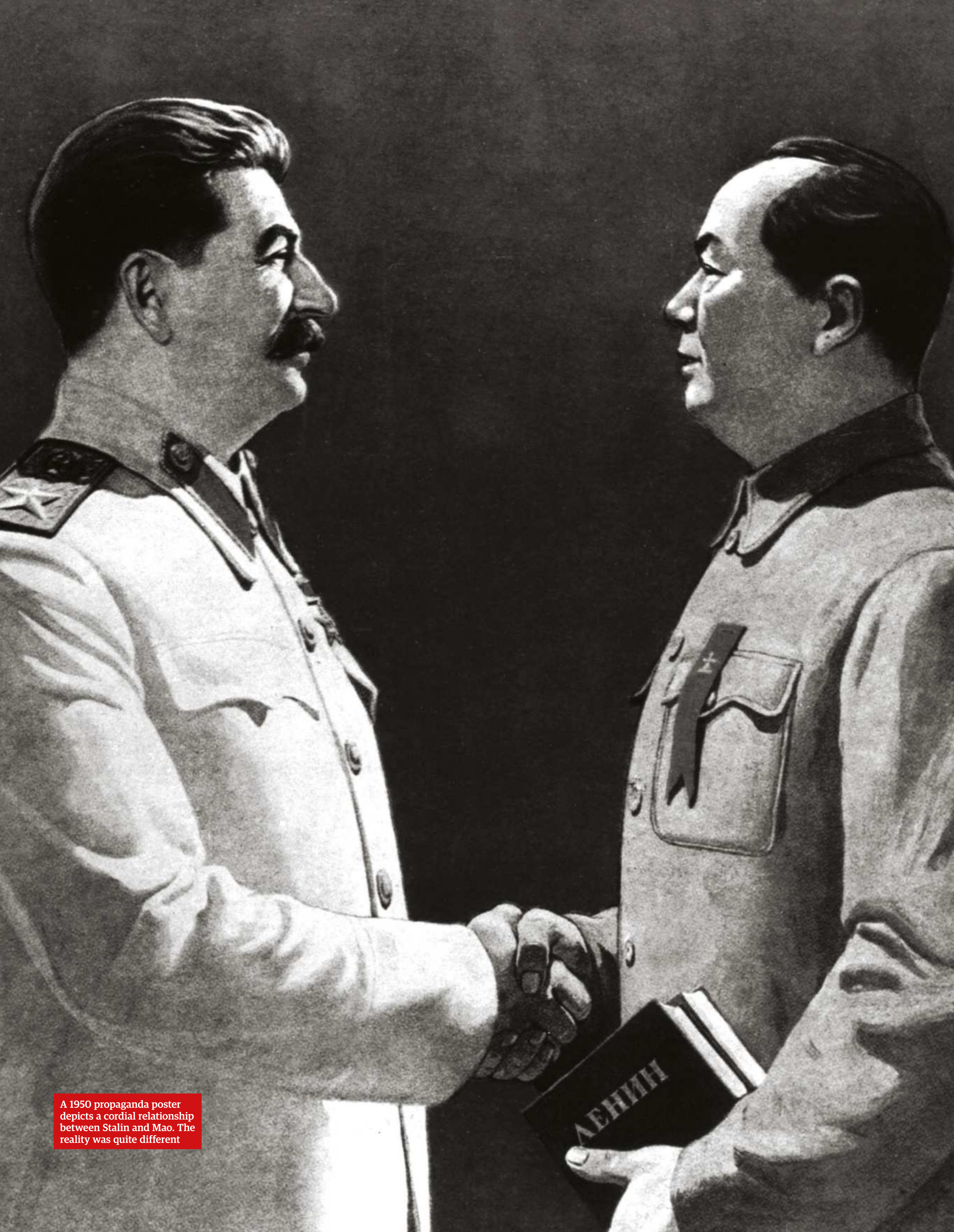
This wasn't East versus West; this was East versus Far East – a murderous mirror image of the standoff between communism and capitalism. This was the other cold war.

In the red corner, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics at the height of its military expansion under the iron fist of the repressive Leonid Brezhnev. In the other red corner, the People's Republic of China, in the grip of a cultural revolution that had purged independent thinkers to replace them with a fanatical devotion to the unpredictable Mao Zedong.

On 2 March 1969, under what CIA analysts believed were direct orders from Mao's government in Beijing, Chinese border guards and soldiers of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) ambushed a unit of Soviet KGB border troops. Appearing unarmed, the Chinese threw aside their winter coats and gunned seven of them down at close range on the disputed Zhenbao/Damansky Island in the frozen Ussuri River where Chinese Manchuria meets the Soviet Far East. Instantly, around 300 more PLA soldiers burst out of foxholes and opened fire on the remaining Soviets.

This brutal clash was the escalation of a 'pushing war' in which Soviet and Chinese soldiers had patrolled the same contested stretch of tundra, shouting and shoving each other for years. Mao's gambit was that either the Soviets wouldn't retaliate, or would do so at a small scale, despite the huge buildup of Red Army might in the region. He was right: the response was small, but coming from a foe considerably better armed, it was still a crushing and humbling defeat. The KGB's elite border guards equipped with snow camouflage embedded themselves on the island, cutting down a Chinese detachment with a rattle of automatic fire in a bloody counter-ambush, while state-of-the-art T-62 medium tanks and devastating BM-21 Grad rocket artillery were brought up, quickly resulting in what CIA reports described as 'several hundred' Chinese casualties.

The Chinese began to dig in for further conflict, while the Soviets armed their warheads and issued threats, and this bitter clash for ownership of a single waterway and a handful of rocky islands threatened to enter an even more dramatic and deadly phase.

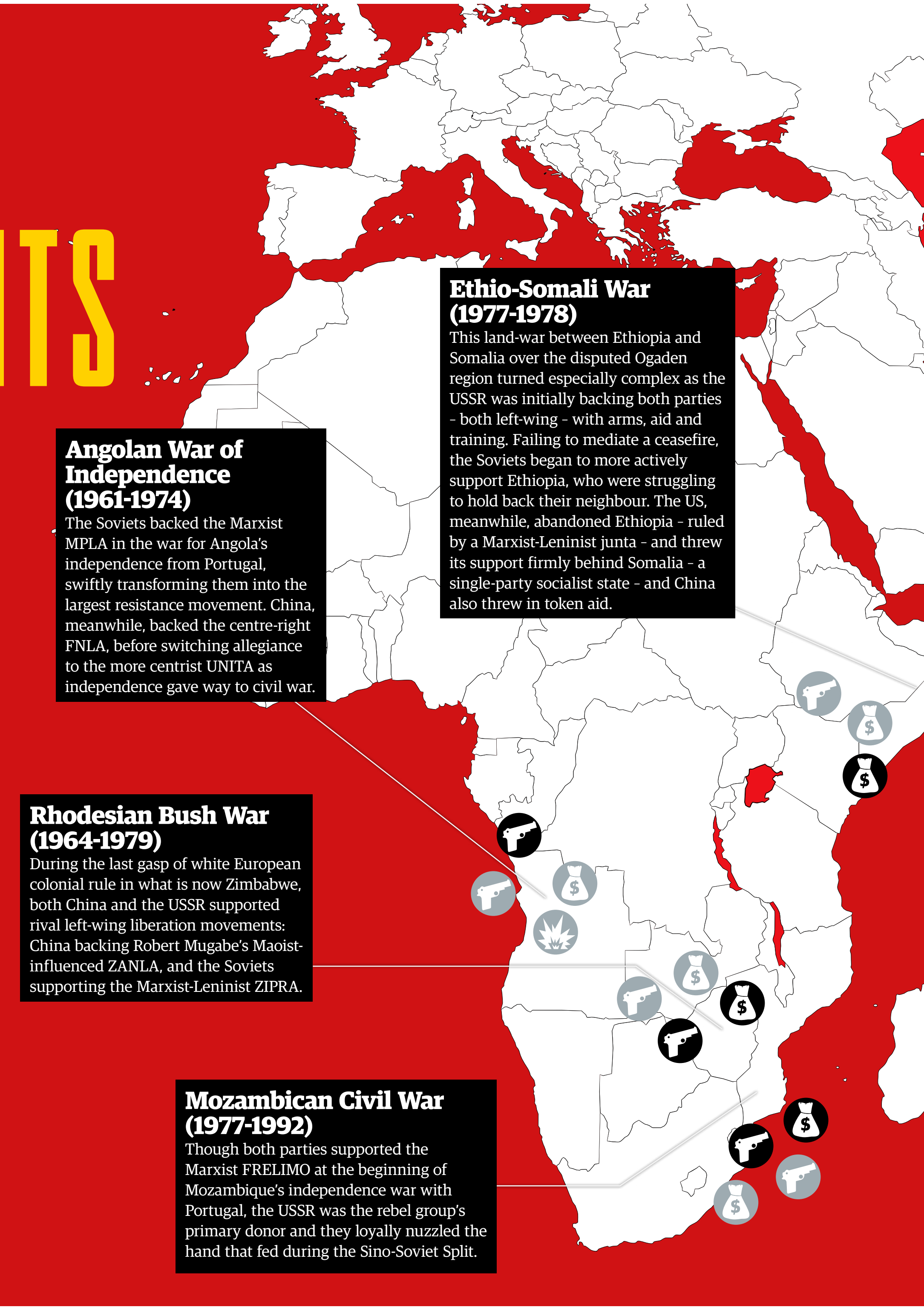


A 1950 propaganda poster depicts a cordial relationship between Stalin and Mao. The reality was quite different

GLOBAL FLASHPOINTS

KEY

China		USSR
●	Loans & aid	○
●	Ground war	○
●	Arms & training	○
●	Proxy war	○



Ethio-Somali War (1977-1978)

This land-war between Ethiopia and Somalia over the disputed Ogaden region turned especially complex as the USSR was initially backing both parties - both left-wing - with arms, aid and training. Failing to mediate a ceasefire, the Soviets began to more actively support Ethiopia, who were struggling to hold back their neighbour. The US, meanwhile, abandoned Ethiopia - ruled by a Marxist-Leninist junta - and threw its support firmly behind Somalia - a single-party socialist state - and China also threw in token aid.

Angolan War of Independence (1961-1974)

The Soviets backed the Marxist MPLA in the war for Angola's independence from Portugal, swiftly transforming them into the largest resistance movement. China, meanwhile, backed the centre-right FNLA, before switching allegiance to the more centrist UNITA as independence gave way to civil war.

Rhodesian Bush War (1964-1979)

During the last gasp of white European colonial rule in what is now Zimbabwe, both China and the USSR supported rival left-wing liberation movements: China backing Robert Mugabe's Maoist-influenced ZANLA, and the Soviets supporting the Marxist-Leninist ZIPRA.

Mozambican Civil War (1977-1992)

Though both parties supported the Marxist FRELIMO at the beginning of Mozambique's independence war with Portugal, the USSR was the rebel group's primary donor and they loyally nuzzled the hand that fed during the Sino-Soviet Split.

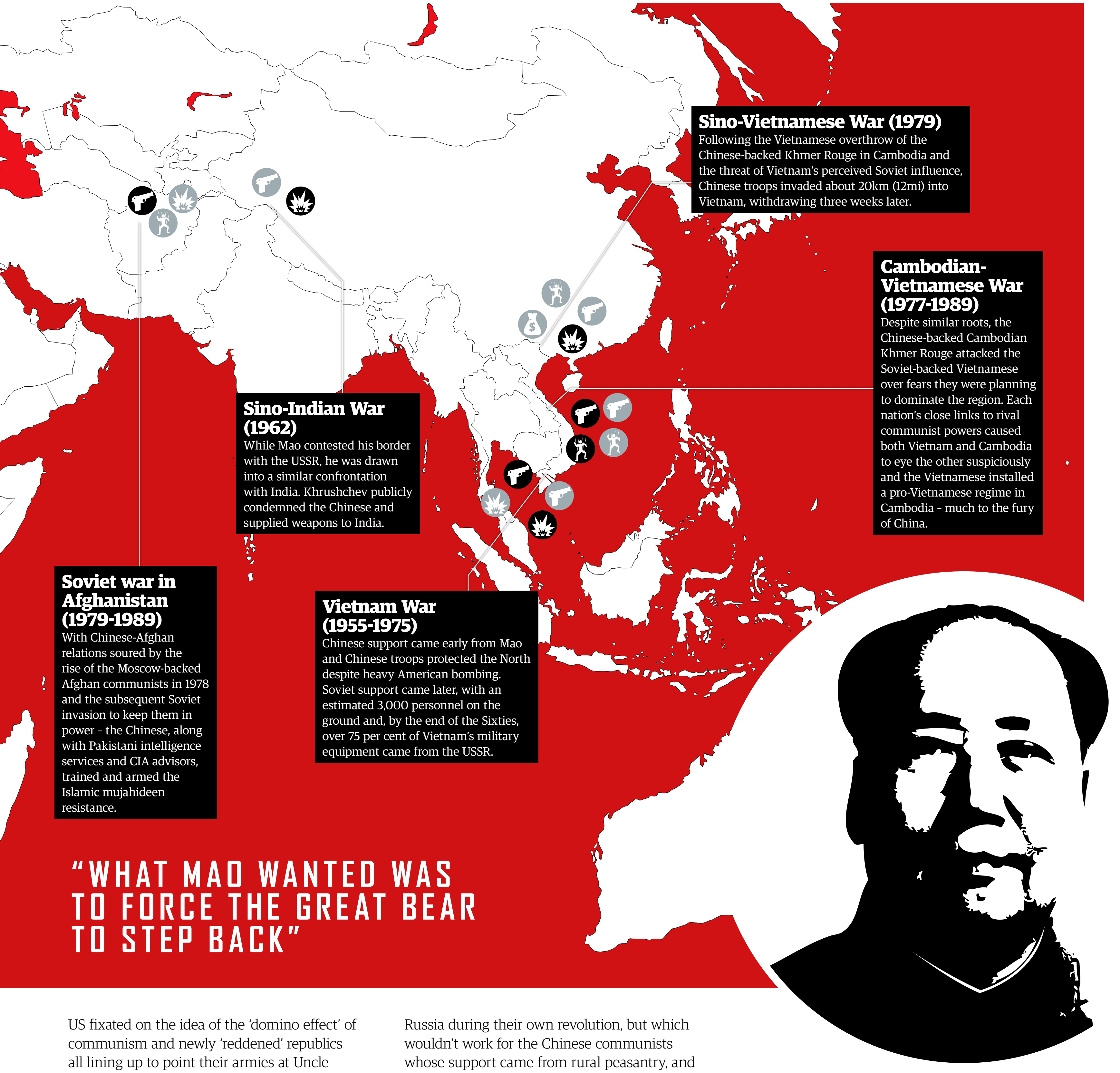
Eventually though, Mao backed down and diplomatic negotiations over the territory resumed. He was ready for a land invasion, and perhaps even prepared for a nuclear strike, but he wasn't about to see his fledgling nuclear programme - the key to China's status as a world power - wiped out.

Flying back from the funeral of Vietnamese communist leader Ho Chi Minh in Hanoi, the Soviet prime minister, Alexei Kosygin, stopped in Beijing for talks with his Chinese counterpart, Zhou Enlai. Mao himself refused to attend, and the meeting that brought the Sino-Soviet Border War to an end was held in Beijing Airport. The relationship was normalised, but it certainly wasn't normal - in fact, it never had been; this first bloody-knuckled drag-'em-out between two of the most volatile superpowers is stark evidence of just how real the danger of nuclear escalation really was.

The emphasis that Beijing placed on protecting its infant nuclear status is the real signifier that the Sino-Soviet Border Conflict was much more in political terms than just a tussle for strategically inconsequential strips of land on the fringes of both their vast empires.

In fact, China had happily ceded similar-sized territory in earlier treaties with Mongolia and Burma. In demanding the revision of the 'unequal' treaties bullied out of the Chinese Qing Dynasty by Tsarist Russia in 1858 and 1860, what Mao really wanted was to force the great bear to take a step back and make some concessions, ending China's junior status in the communist world. His tactic was simple; he hectored and needled, denouncing 'Soviet imperialism' openly, while his forces maintained constant probing patrols into the territory claimed by the Soviets.

The violent deterioration of the relationship between China and the USSR came as a shock to the West. The entire foreign policy of the



Sino-Vietnamese War (1979)
Following the Vietnamese overthrow of the Chinese-backed Khmer Rouge in Cambodia and the threat of Vietnam's perceived Soviet influence, Chinese troops invaded about 20km (12mi) into Vietnam, withdrawing three weeks later.

Cambodian-Vietnamese War (1977-1989)
Despite similar roots, the Chinese-backed Cambodian Khmer Rouge attacked the Soviet-backed Vietnamese over fears they were planning to dominate the region. Each nation's close links to rival communist powers caused both Vietnam and Cambodia to eye the other suspiciously and the Vietnamese installed a pro-Vietnamese regime in Cambodia - much to the fury of China.

Sino-Indian War (1962)
While Mao contested his border with the USSR, he was drawn into a similar confrontation with India. Khrushchev publicly condemned the Chinese and supplied weapons to India.

Soviet war in Afghanistan (1979-1989)
With Chinese-Afghan relations soured by the rise of the Moscow-backed Afghan communists in 1978 and the subsequent Soviet invasion to keep them in power - the Chinese, along with Pakistani intelligence services and CIA advisors, trained and armed the Islamic mujahideen resistance.

Vietnam War (1955-1975)
Chinese support came early from Mao and Chinese troops protected the North despite heavy American bombing. Soviet support came later, with an estimated 3,000 personnel on the ground and, by the end of the Sixties, over 75 per cent of Vietnam's military equipment came from the USSR.

> "WHAT MAO WANTED WAS TO FORCE THE GREAT BEAR TO STEP BACK"

US fixated on the idea of the 'domino effect' of communism and newly 'reddened' republics all lining up to point their armies at Uncle Sam. Despite the rhetoric that invoked ancient emperors and 19th-century misdeeds, this was only partly an ancient grudge match. Under the rosy propaganda of one unified socialist brotherhood linking arms for a better tomorrow was a very real strain between rival communist powers that had been mounting for decades.

In the Chinese Civil War from 1927 to 1950, Soviet aid and advisors interfered in the running of the communist cause. Mao blamed several failures on Soviet influence - for example, their insistence on tactics that worked in industrialised Russia during their own revolution, but which wouldn't work for the Chinese communists whose support came from rural peasantry, and also for treating the Soviet-trained CPC party grandees as more important than the leaders in the field like himself.

Mao claimed in a 1956 conversation with the Soviet ambassador PF Yudin that these failed urban uprisings in the 1920s and early 1930s had cost the communist forces dearly, reducing their numbers from 300,000 to 25,000.

When the Japanese occupation of Manchuria in 1931 transformed into the bloody assault on the rest of China in 1937, Soviet leader Joseph Stalin encouraged Mao to form a united front with his enemy - the nationalist Kuomintang commanded by Chiang Kai-shek. More galling for Mao, Stalin then signed a treaty of friendship with the Kuomintang and treated the generalissimo as the sole representative of China. Japanese weapons captured by the Soviets were divvied out to both the CPC and the Kuomintang in 1945 and 1946, but the nationalists ended up with twice as many rifles and six times as many machine guns.

The eventual CPC victory and the rise of Mao as leader of the People's Republic of China on 1

October 1949 did lead to full Soviet recognition, albeit four months after the event. The Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance, signed in February 1950, was the subject of much alarm in Washington and braying propaganda from all sides, but this concealed bitter negotiations in which Mao fought off attempts to cede more Chinese territory to the USSR.

"The very room where the talks were held was like a stage where a demonic show was being acted out," recalled Stalin's interpreter NT Fedorenko in 1989. "When Stalin walked in, everyone seemed to stop breathing, to freeze."

From the outside though, these two 'evil empires' were marching in lockstep, and the 1950-1953 Korean War seemed to prove the hawks in the West right as Chinese and Soviet air support sheltered the North Korean war machine. While communist air power held the skies, Chinese ground troops armed with Soviet weapons took to the field. Despite this apparent axis of evil, tensions between the USSR and China were growing.

The wreckage of a Soviet-built T-34 in the Korean War

Stalin was eager to avoid any direct confrontation with the US, limiting Soviet involvement to the air, (and ensuring Soviet troops were wearing Chinese uniforms, flying under North Korean colours and forbidden to speak Russian over the radio) and insisted on the Soviet fighters operating under their own command rather than one unified hierarchy along with the Chinese and North Koreans.

With no shared codes or communications at a grass-roots level, this resulted in very high friendly fire as North Korean or Chinese ground troops opened fire on Soviet MiGs whose markings they didn't recognise, who in turn shot down Chinese pilots for the same reason. Both powers were also severely overstretched; the poorly armed and under-trained Chinese relied heavily on Soviet equipment, which the USSR was struggling to produce due to the ongoing strain caused by World War II. In order to balance the books, Stalin slapped the Chinese with a bill of around $650 million (approximately £420 million) that crippled the country's economy for decades to come.

While the Korean War crystallised on 27 July 1953 into the stalemate that divides the country to this day, Stalin's ignominious end came earlier that same year. On 5 March the Russian premier died following a stroke, and Nikita Khrushchev emerged from the scramble for power in the vacuum Stalin's death created to establish a more cordial relationship with Mao. The new Soviet leader quickly pledged technical support for China's attempts to industrialise, along with over 520 million rubles in loans. The two leaders also encouraged Vietnamese communist premier, Ho Chi Minh, to accept the division of Vietnam into red north and capitalist south at the Geneva Conference of 1954.

Mao certainly didn't like Stalin, but as Khrushchev increasingly pulled away from the tyrant's old order, Mao began to see this as an affront - perhaps even threat - to his own regime. Khrushchev's denunciation of the dead leader's cult of personality in 1956 came as Mao was building his own, and Khrushchev's talk of 'peaceful coexistence' with the West clashed with Mao's increasing belligerence and militancy. Then the Soviet leader reneged on a pledge to help the Chinese develop their own nuclear arsenal, even using the USSR's veto to keep China out of the United Nations.

All things considered, the initial response was fairly restrained, with China criticising Yugoslavia and the Soviets criticising Albania, whose paranoid despot Enver Hoxha had denounced Khrushchev's 'coexistence' with the West in favour of China. As the denunciations moved into the open in 1960 - the year of the split proper

IN AT THE DEEP END...

Personal tensions between Mao and Khrushchev foreshadowed the split to come

Recalling his first visit to China in his memoirs, Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev observed, 'I saw through their hypocrisy... [W]hen I came back I told my comrades, "Conflict with China is inevitable."'

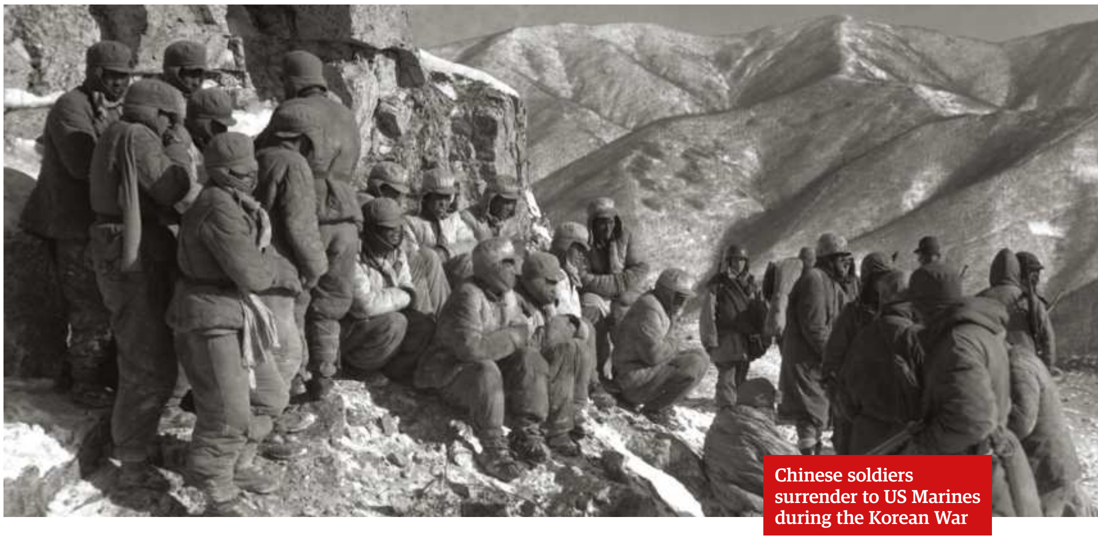
This view, however, might have been coloured by a demeaning, later visit in 1958 where the Chinese leader Mao Zedong belittled the Russian from the airport onward, putting him up in a hotel with no air conditioning and flatly refusing Soviet proposals for joint defence initiatives. Mao's personal physician, Li Zhisui, described the Chinese commander as behaving like an emperor, while "treating Khrushchev like a barbarian come to pay tribute."

The next morning came the ultimate indignity for the Russian when Mao forced him into a swimming pool at his luxury compound, Zhongnanhai, knowing full well that the Soviet premier had never properly learnt to swim. As Khrushchev bobbed uncertainly in the shallows, Mao called for flotation aids - described mockingly as a child's 'water wings' by US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger - allowing him to join the CPC chairman in the deep end.

'He's a prizewinning swimmer, and I'm a miner,' recalled Khrushchev in his memoirs. 'Between us, I basically flop around when I swim; I'm not very good at it. But he swims around, showing off, all the while expounding his political views... It was Mao's way of putting himself in an advantageous position.'

Coming two years after the Soviet premier's denunciation of Stalin, and two years before what is now recognised as the beginning of the Sino-Soviet Split, this bizarre display was perhaps the most vivid and idiosyncratic single portrait of relations between the two communist nations for over a decade.

“THE SOVIET LEADER RENEGED ON A PLEDGE TO HELP CHINA DEVELOP THEIR OWN NUCLEAR ARSENAL”



Chinese soldiers surrender to US Marines during the Korean War

- they became more overt and more cutting. Despite the widening gulf between the two countries, the US remained largely oblivious, with then vice-president Richard Nixon wondering in a 1959 meeting of the US National Security Council whether any talk of a Sino-Soviet spat might in fact be some dastardly plot. The following year President Eisenhower agreed with Chiang Kai-shek (who by this point was ruling only the island of Taiwan) that “the communist bloc works as a bloc, pursues a global scheme, and no party to the bloc takes independent action.”

Though Khrushchev made headlines in Europe and North America for his table-banging rhetoric and his ghoulish declaration of “We will bury you”, the man who started the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis should perhaps also be remembered as the man who ended it. Mao criticised the Soviet leader openly for backing down, and by the time the Soviet leader made his first nuclear threats over Zhenbao/Damansky in 1964, the Chinese premier knew better than to take it seriously.

Only with the rise later that same year of Leonid Brezhnev, who took the Soviet Union to missile parity with the United States and crushed opposition to Soviet influence in Czechoslovakia with force of arms, were the threats backed up. Truck-mounted Scaleboard launchers were placed under the command of the officers on the ground for the first time, and the jingoistic Radio Peace and Progress blared all over the globe in a multitude of languages: “Are we afraid of Mao Zedong and his pawns, who are making a display of might on our border? The whole world knows that the main striking force of the Soviet Armed Forces is its rocket units.”

Even after the Sino-Soviet Border War ended, Brezhnev knew better than to take his eye off the region, and by 1971 44 divisions of around 10,000-13,000 men, or 32-40 aircraft each, were keeping watch over the vast 4,380-kilometre (2,738-mile) shared border - along with the complex infrastructure required to support them. Soviet troop numbers in neighbouring Mongolia also grew to 100,000, dwarfing the Mongolian People’s Republic’s own army of around 30,000 soldiers.

Though China and the USSR never waged another open war, they clashed sabres in a multitude of proxy wars across Africa, South East Asia and beyond, through rebel groups and communist regimes. More importantly, the irreparable collapse of the Sino-Soviet relationship radically changed the global order.

Recognising that he couldn’t fight war on two fronts - and judging the threat of invasion from the USSR far greater than an American attack - Mao chose rapprochement with the old enemy, leading to an unlikely 1972 state visit of US president Richard Nixon to China. Nixon saw a closer relationship with China as an opportunity to undermine Soviet influence.

Khrushchev died in 1971 without seeing that his talk of ‘peaceful coexistence’ had come to fruition - but between China and the US, rather than the USSR and the US. Neither did he see the more famous Cold War play out for a further two decades, ending with the Red Army’s bloody withdrawal from Afghanistan and, subsequently, the ultimate dissolution of the Soviet Union.

THE BERLIN WALL

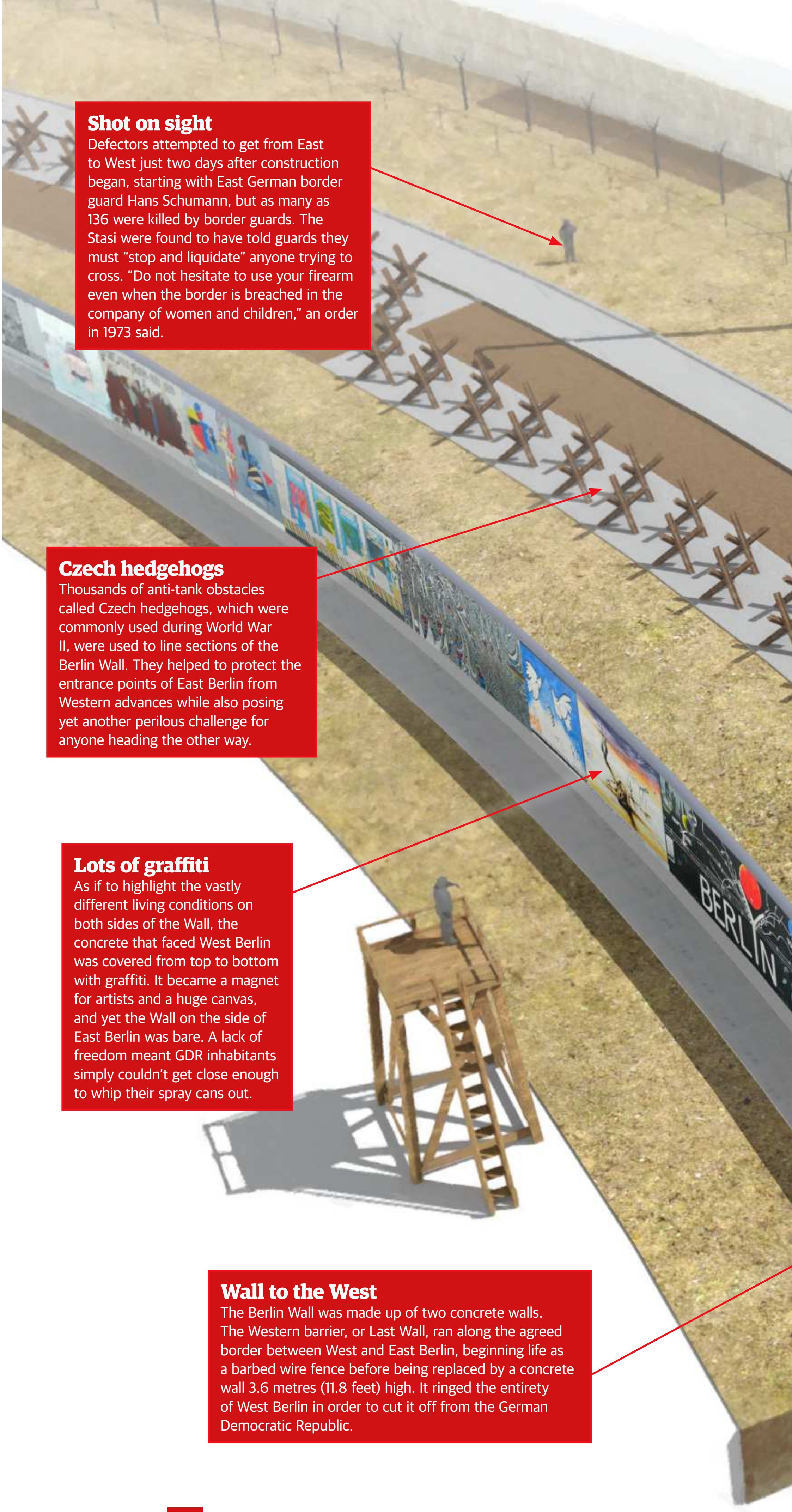
East Berlin,
East Germany, 1961-1989

For 15 years, officials in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) had watched with growing anger as more than two million people fled for a better life in West Germany. Worried about the ongoing brain drain of the mainly young and educated defectors who were fleeing over the border between East and West Berlin, the Soviet Union - which had administered and occupied the GDR since its formation in 1949 - was asked to build a wall, and it finally relented in 1961.

Residents in Berlin woke to find their city physically divided. Barbed wire ringed the border of West Berlin, effectively creating a city-based island within the GDR. Days later, the wire was ripped down and replaced with concrete. Families and friends were being torn apart and kept separated by the Wall but the governing Marxist-Leninist Socialist Unity Party of Germany set about fortifying it further.

Buildings bordering the Wall on the East side were torn down to create a strip that could afford guards uninterrupted views of anyone looking to escape. A second wall was later built providing even more of a barrier. The 155-kilometre (96 miles) strip of land it created around West Berlin became an area where fewer and fewer people would dare tread for fear of death. Dozens were fired upon for trying to escape and mistrust between East and West was at an all-time high.

The communist party played down the Wall, saying it had been built to prevent Western attack. But it could see the damage it was causing. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, many of the fortifications were removed, or at least hidden, and there were attempts to present a friendlier image to tourists. Some obstructions were gone by the time the Wall fell in 1989. Yet the foreboding steps that had been taken to curtail freedom highlighted the communist government's moral bankruptcy.

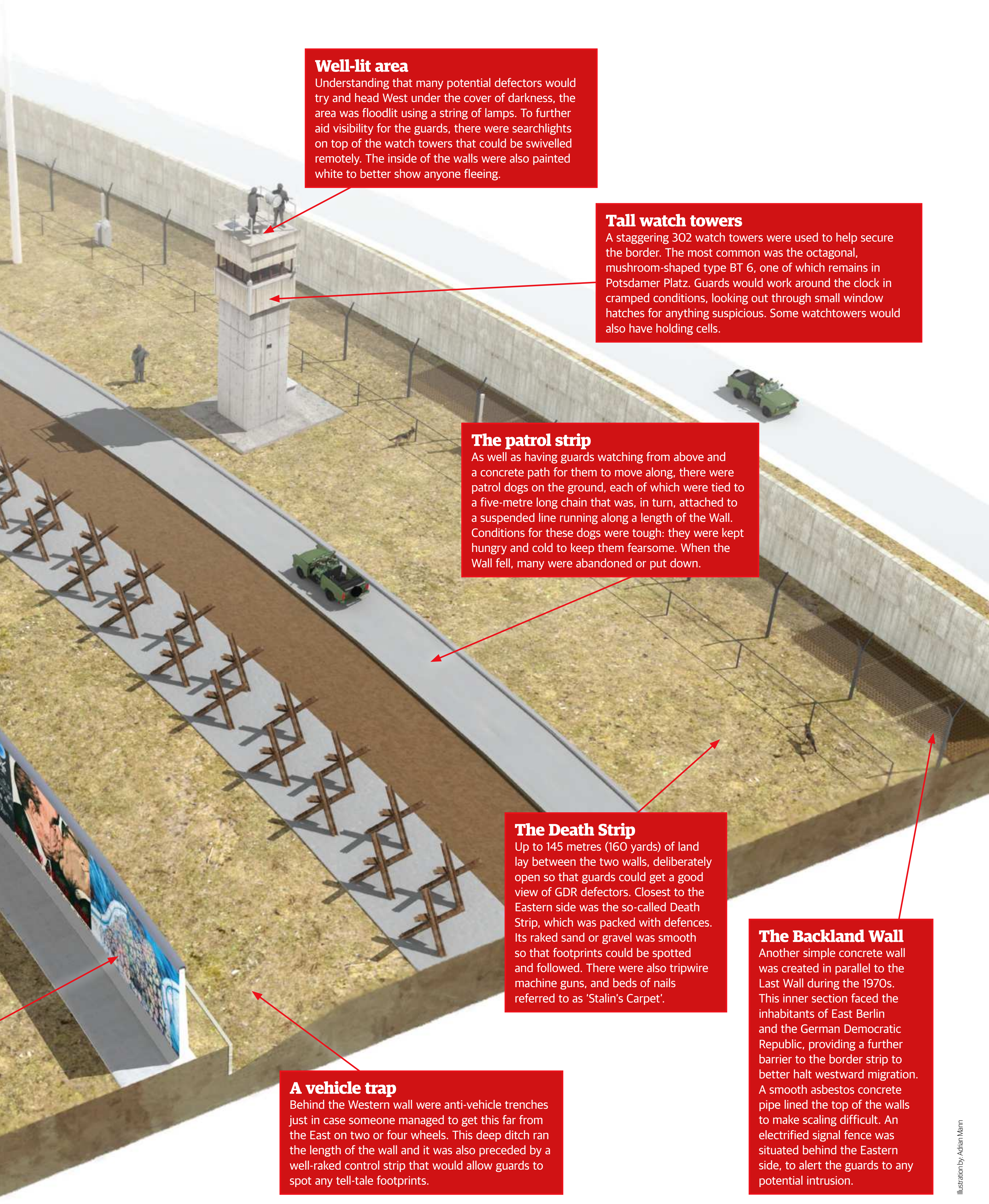


Shot on sight
Defectors attempted to get from East to West just two days after construction began, starting with East German border guard Hans Schumann, but as many as 136 were killed by border guards. The Stasi were found to have told guards they must "stop and liquidate" anyone trying to cross. "Do not hesitate to use your firearm even when the border is breached in the company of women and children," an order in 1973 said.

Czech hedgehogs
Thousands of anti-tank obstacles called Czech hedgehogs, which were commonly used during World War II, were used to line sections of the Berlin Wall. They helped to protect the entrance points of East Berlin from Western advances while also posing yet another perilous challenge for anyone heading the other way.

Lots of graffiti
As if to highlight the vastly different living conditions on both sides of the Wall, the concrete that faced West Berlin was covered from top to bottom with graffiti. It became a magnet for artists and a huge canvas, and yet the Wall on the side of East Berlin was bare. A lack of freedom meant GDR inhabitants simply couldn't get close enough to whip their spray cans out.

Wall to the West
The Berlin Wall was made up of two concrete walls. The Western barrier, or Last Wall, ran along the agreed border between West and East Berlin, beginning life as a barbed wire fence before being replaced by a concrete wall 3.6 metres (11.8 feet) high. It ringed the entirety of West Berlin in order to cut it off from the German Democratic Republic.



Well-lit area

Understanding that many potential defectors would try and head West under the cover of darkness, the area was floodlit using a string of lamps. To further aid visibility for the guards, there were searchlights on top of the watch towers that could be swivelled remotely. The inside of the walls were also painted white to better show anyone fleeing.

Tall watch towers

A staggering 302 watch towers were used to help secure the border. The most common was the octagonal, mushroom-shaped type BT 6, one of which remains in Potsdamer Platz. Guards would work around the clock in cramped conditions, looking out through small window hatches for anything suspicious. Some watchtowers would also have holding cells.

The patrol strip

As well as having guards watching from above and a concrete path for them to move along, there were patrol dogs on the ground, each of which were tied to a five-metre long chain that was, in turn, attached to a suspended line running along a length of the Wall. Conditions for these dogs were tough: they were kept hungry and cold to keep them fearsome. When the Wall fell, many were abandoned or put down.

The Death Strip

Up to 145 metres (160 yards) of land lay between the two walls, deliberately open so that guards could get a good view of GDR defectors. Closest to the Eastern side was the so-called Death Strip, which was packed with defences. Its raked sand or gravel was smooth so that footprints could be spotted and followed. There were also tripwire machine guns, and beds of nails referred to as 'Stalin's Carpet'.

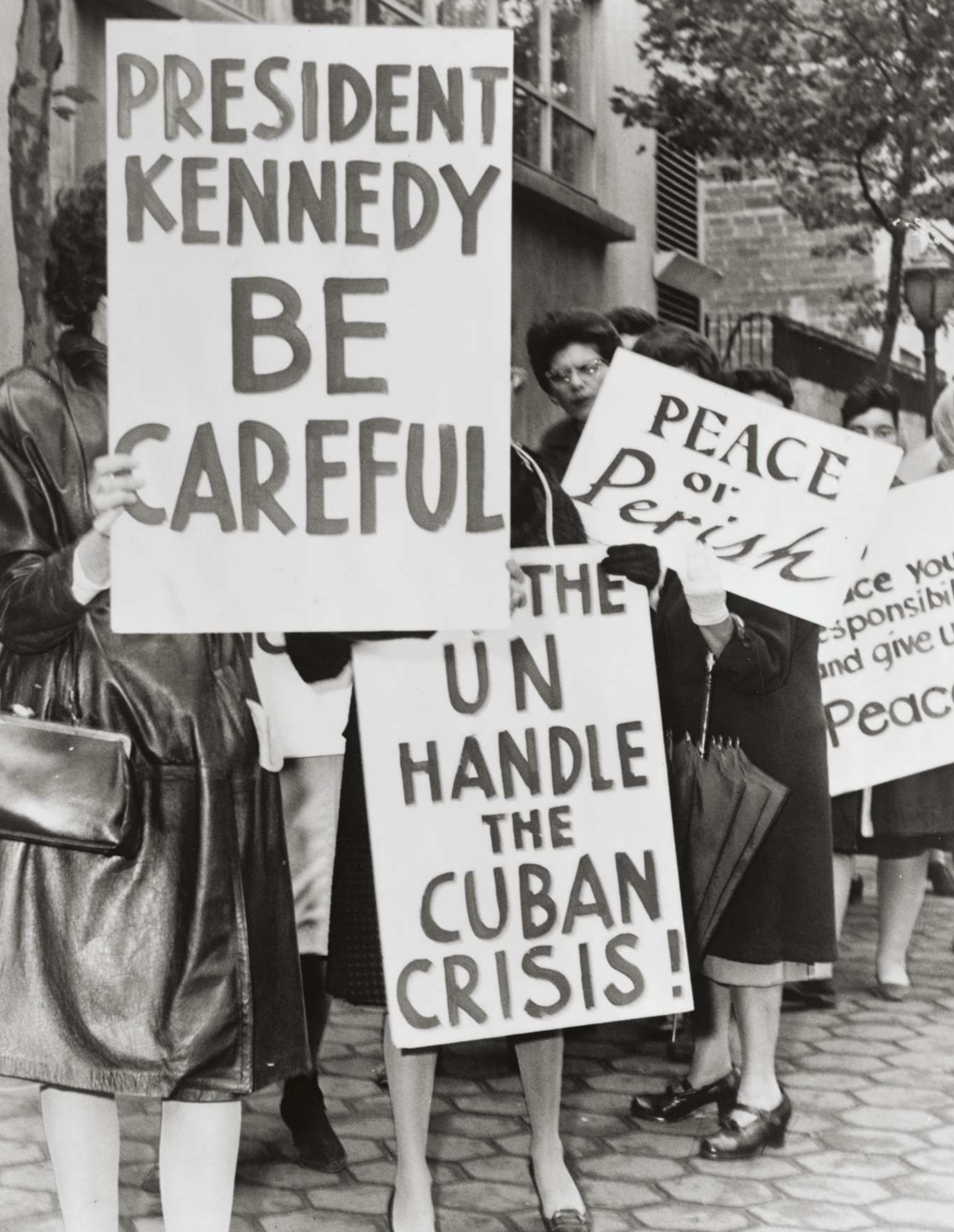
The Backland Wall

Another simple concrete wall was created in parallel to the Last Wall during the 1970s. This inner section faced the inhabitants of East Berlin and the German Democratic Republic, providing a further barrier to the border strip to better halt westward migration. A smooth asbestos concrete pipe lined the top of the walls to make scaling difficult. An electrified signal fence was situated behind the Eastern side, to alert the guards to any potential intrusion.

A vehicle trap

Behind the Western wall were anti-vehicle trenches just in case someone managed to get this far from the East on two or four wheels. This deep ditch ran the length of the wall and it was also preceded by a well-raked control strip that would allow guards to spot any tell-tale footprints.

Illustration by: Adrian Mann


PRESIDENT KENNEDY BE CAREFUL
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THE UN HANDLE THE CUBAN CRISIS!

13 DAYS OF ARMAGEDDON

At the height of the Cold War, Cuba became the centre of a deadly face-off between the United States and the USSR

In October 1962 the world almost ended. At the height of the Cold War, the United States of America and the Soviet Union found themselves in a tense standoff over Russian medium and intermediate-range ballistic missiles being stockpiled in bases in the rebellious Caribbean island Republic of Cuba. Over a terrifying 13 days, the two superpowers came to the brink of nuclear war, with their mutually assured destruction looking alarmingly possible. To the Russians, this dark chapter of their history is referred to as the Caribbean Crisis. To the Cubans, it's the October Crisis. But to the United States and much of the rest of the world, the words 'the Cuban Missile Crisis' are those that invoke that particular chill of almost unimaginable horror only narrowly averted.

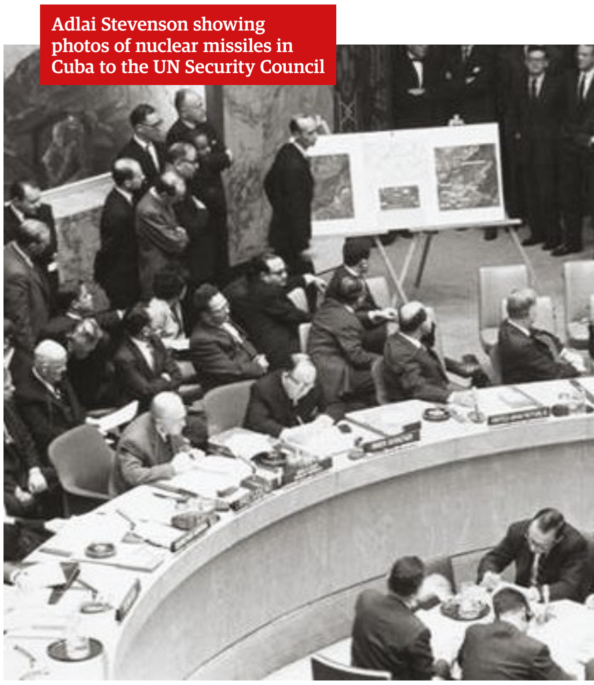
By the time of the Crisis, the United States and Russia had been engaged in their Cold War for almost 20 years since the end of the Second World War – some trace it back even further to the First World War. Not a conflict in the usual sense, it had mostly been an affair played out through espionage rather than military force, although the superpowers had each involved themselves in regional wars in China, Greece and Korea. After 1945, the single-party Marxist-Leninist Soviet State found itself in complete ideological opposition to the States' 'free' capitalist society, consolidating its control over the Eastern Bloc, while the United States tried to contain it through international initiatives like NATO. Having wrestled for control and influence in Latin America and the decolonising states of Africa, the Middle East and Southeast Asia in the intervening years, events between the two opponents finally came to a long-threatened head in Cuba.

The immediate roots of the Cuban Missile Crisis lay in Cuba's regime change of 1959: a revolution that ousted incumbent dictator Fulgencio Batista and installed the communist commander-in-chief of the Cuban Revolutionary Army, Fidel Castro, as prime minister and later president. As supporters of Batista and other Latin American dictators, the US government suddenly found itself on the receiving end of harsh criticism from Castro when he opened diplomatic relations with them. Their response was a failed attempt to assassinate Castro, after which he demanded the complete withdrawal of the US military from Guantánamo Bay. They refused and remain there; it's the only US military base in a country it doesn't officially recognise.

Castro travelled to the US in the spring of 1959 to meet with president Dwight D Eisenhower, but was snubbed by him and met only by vice president Richard Nixon. Their meeting did not go well, and Castro further alienated the US when he announced to the United Nations that Cuba would maintain a neutral position in the fractious relationship between the US and the USSR.

	KENNEDY	KHRUSHCHEV
Political stance	JFK became president in 1960 for the Democratic Party. He aimed to end racial segregation in schools and public places, and liberalised immigration laws. He strengthened unemployment benefits and called on the nations of the world to band together to fight poverty, hunger and disease. He also urged Americans to be active citizens, famously saying, "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country."	Khrushchev was first secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union from 1958 until 1964. He was responsible for moving the Communist Party away from Stalinism, ending forced labour and closing the Gulags. He was an early backer of the Soviet Space Programme, and was behind some relatively liberal domestic policies, such as allowing more freedom to the arts and opening up the opportunity for ordinary Soviets to travel abroad.
Foreign policy	With his presidency at the height of the Cold War, Kennedy was a vehement anti-communist. He fought communism in developing nations and introduced the Space Race as much from a perceived necessity to beat the Russians to the Moon as for the scientific achievement. As well as the Cuban Missile Crisis, Kennedy's administration intervened in Vietnam against communists there. After Cuba, Kennedy's US negotiated a nuclear test ban treaty with the USSR and the UK.	The Soviet premier appointed himself as head of the USSR's UN delegation in 1960, where he was accused of a double standard by claiming to oppose colonialism while at the same time attempting communist domination of Eastern Europe and Southeast Asia and the Third World. Achieving the first manned space flight led the world to infer the USSR's nuclear weapons programme was further ahead than it was. Khrushchev was happy not to disabuse anyone of that notion.
Military experience	Kennedy served in the US Navy from 1941 until 1945. He was working in the office of the secretary of the Navy when the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor took place, but he subsequently saw action in Panama and the Pacific, commanding torpedo boats and achieving the rank of lieutenant. He received the Purple Heart and the WWII Victory Medal among several other decorations. He was finally released from active service due to a recurring back injury.	He served in the Red Army as a political commissar, both during the Russian Civil War (1917-1922) and WWII. The rank was roughly equal to that of a unit commander, but the commissar has the military to countermand the commander's orders when he deems it necessary. Khrushchev's primary function was as a political intermediary between troops and Moscow. He did see action at the Defence of Stalingrad in 1942, though, which he remained proud of for the rest of his life.
Advisors	Among Kennedy's main advisors were vice president Lyndon B Johnson, Secretary of State Dean Rusk, Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield, Secretary of Defence Robert S McNamara and Attorney General Robert F Kennedy, JFK's brother. During the Cuban Missile Crisis, Kennedy convened the special advisory committee EXCOMM, including all the above, Ambassador to the Soviet Union Llewellyn Thompson, with members of the CIA and the Defence Department.	Extraordinary as it seems, Khrushchev, after rising to power, decided Soviet policy alone, without any recourse to advisors at all. This could, of course, be viewed as a weakness since it cut his decision-making process off from others, whose input may have been valuable. But it also allowed his instincts free reign: a positive thing in regard to the Cuban Missile Crisis, where his levelheaded inclination toward peace and negotiation arguably averted a global catastrophe.

Adlai Stevenson showing photos of nuclear missiles in Cuba to the UN Security Council



A group of Cuban soldiers who helped in fighting the Bay of Pigs invasion

THE BAY OF PIGS

The failed invasion that led to the Crisis

Why it happened

- Growing concern in the United States over the new left-wing direction of Cuba's politics after the removal of dictator Fulgencio Batista by revolutionaries led by Fidel Castro.
- US concern over trials and subsequent executions of former Batista supporters.
- Castro was an outspoken critic of the USA.

What went wrong?

A damning CIA report from November 1961 outlined a catalogue of points that made the attempted invasion doomed to failure from the beginning. Its author, Inspector General Lyman B. Kirkpatrick, identified that there were no policies or contingency plans in place should the invasion have succeeded. Insufficient and poorly managed staff had been assigned to the project, relatively few of whom even spoke Spanish. US intelligence in Cuba had been improperly analysed. There had been little success in organising internal resistance in Cuba, or of involving exiles from the Castro regime or counter-revolutionaries. And the operation had simply been too big: jumping from covert guerrilla action to a full-blown military intervention in a manner that made 'plausible deniability' impossible.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

16 April 1961

Prelude to invasion

The US mounts diversionary activities around other Cuban locations, to disguise its true intentions. These include the 'Phony War' of 16 April, around Baracoa and Guantánamo.

17 April

Day one

1,400 US troops, four transport ships and a fleet of smaller fibreglass boats enter the Bay of Pigs. Cuba responds with fighter jets and bombers. US paratroopers are dropped onto the island, but land in a swamp and lose all their equipment.

18 April

Day two

Cuban troops, tanks and militia force the invaders and resistance to retreat in several areas. CIA pilots in B-26 bomber planes use bombs, napalm and rockets against Cuban targets, causing civilian casualties alongside their intended police and military victims.

19 April

Day three

Four US airmen are killed when Cuban forces mount a spirited defence against another CIA air attack. Anti-Castro forces on the ground, with their air support lost and ammunition steadily running out, are forced to retreat in the face of a Cuban onslaught.

20 April onwards

The aftermath

US destroyers search for survivors along the Cuban coast while intelligence-gathering flights continue. Hundreds of executions take place in Cuba as retaliation against the opposition.

Subsequent policies redistributing Cuba's wealth were predictably unpopular with Americans, who owned land there and were seeing it removed from them at rates of compensation they were unhappy with. The CIA launched another failed assassination attempt against Castro, and the US military began launching secret bombing raids against Cuban sugar facilities in October 1959, targeting one of its most lucrative exports. American attacks on Cuban oil refineries and civilian targets in Havana followed, all of which the US officially denied.

Castro signed a trade deal with Soviet deputy prime minister Anastas Mikoyan in February 1960, hoping it would gain him more everage in the US. The opposite was true, and Eisenhower, pushed to the limits of his patience with the upstart Cuba, ordered the CIA to overthrow the Republic. Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev publicly came out in support of Cuba; America launched yet another three failed Castro assassination attempts, one of them involving the Mafia; and by April of 1961, America had both imposed full trade and economic sanctions against Cuba and undertaken a covert attempted invasion. The newly elected president, John F. Kennedy, continued to deny any such activity, but by now the American press were on the case and the word was out. Khrushchev warned that the Soviets would intervene against any aggression from the US toward Cuba, and the US, after the death of 200 of its soldiers and the loss of a further thousand as prisoners of war in the Bay of Pigs debacle, was forced to call off its incursion. Kennedy and his government had been thoroughly humiliated.

Beginning to see Kennedy as weak, the Soviets used the lull to seize an opportunity. In August of 1962, reports began reaching the US from Cuba that Soviet trucks loaded with suspicious equipment had been seen on the island. As retaliation for the US installing its own nuclear missiles close to the USSR, Russia was doing the same in the Caribbean. A sizeable arsenal of SS-4 nuclear warheads had been installed on the island - capable of reaching the US east coast - including the political hub of Washington, DC. While initially claiming they were simply providing non-nuclear surface-to-air missiles for Cuba's defence, Khrushchev's real agenda was to gain a stronger political foothold both against the US and its allies in Britain and Europe.

Kennedy's response was to set up EXCOMM - the Executive Committee of the National Security Council - which suggested six options. Doing nothing was obviously impossible, but diplomacy was already not working; threatening Castro generally achieved the opposite of the desired effect; and either war with or the occupation of Cuba was an enormous risk. The ultimate decision was to blockade the island, although for legal reasons (it would be considered an act of war) this was sold as a 'quarantine' of Cuba.

At 7pm on 22 October 1962, Kennedy announced on US television and radio that this 'quarantine' of Cuba was in effect immediately,

A Neptune warplane flying over a Soviet transport ship in October 1962

THE LONGEST 13 DAYS IN HISTORY

A day-by-day account of the events of the Cuban Missile Crisis

16 October

President Kennedy and his staff are briefed on reconnaissance photos of Russian missile bases under construction in Cuba. Kennedy maintains his public schedule while covertly discussing whether to launch air strikes or blockade Cuba's coasts.

17 October

Kennedy continues his official public engagements, with the president feeling it important to keep up appearances rather than arouse concern. He has lunch with Crown Prince Hassan of Libya and visits Connecticut to support Democratic election candidates.

18 October

Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko insists that Russia's aid to Cuba is purely in the cause of defence and presents no threat to the USA. Kennedy warns Gromyko of grave consequences should Soviet nuclear weapons be found on Cuban soil.

19 October

Kennedy heads out on the congressional campaign trail to Ohio and Illinois, as previously scheduled before the missile crisis surfaced. Debate continues to rage among his advisors as to the best course of action in Cuba as Kennedy travels.

20 October

Kennedy returns to Washington, and after an intense five hours of deliberation, the plan to blockade – or 'quarantine' – Cuba is finally decided upon. Work begins on the military and naval plans, and on drafting a speech to inform the public of the situation.

21 October

Another day of meetings and phone calls on both sides. Tactical Air Commander Walter Sweeney advises Kennedy that an air strike against Cuba could not guarantee the complete destruction of all the Russian missiles on the ground.

> "THE US GOVERNMENT SUDDENLY FOUND ITSELF ON THE RECEIVING END OF HARSH CRITICISM FROM CASTRO"

stopping the shipment of all offensive military equipment to Cuba. 5,000 US troops were deployed to the Guantánamo base, along with airborne and naval forces. In turn, Castro began to mobilise Cuba's forces, and Khrushchev declared the quarantine to be a hostile manoeuvre, threatening that war with the United States was becoming a very real possibility if the States didn't leave Cuba alone.

The next day, US planes ascertained that the Soviets were actually performing launch tests on their missiles, leading US ships to take up position off Cuba's coastline, barring any ships from getting any nearer to the island. By 25 October, Kennedy had written to Khrushchev promising full-scale conflict if the Soviets didn't remove their missiles from Cuban soil. Khrushchev's eventual response on 26 October was to suggest a compromise: the USSR would withdraw its nuclear arsenal in exchange for a legal assurance from the US that it would never invade Cuba again, or support any other country attempting to do so.

Kennedy was willing to use this as the basis for some serious negotiations, but Castro, caught in the middle of the standoff, remained unconvinced, distrustful of Kennedy. He wrote to Khrushchev outlining his belief that the US would eventually invade Cuba regardless of what had been agreed, and giving carte-blanche to the Soviets to remain in Cuba with their missiles, as the island's first best line of defence and deterrent. "I believe the imperialists' aggressiveness is extremely dangerous," said the Cuban prime minister in what's now known as 'The Armageddon Letter'. "If they actually carry out the brutal act of invading Cuba in violation of international law and morality, that would be the moment to eliminate such danger forever through an act of clear legitimate defence, however harsh and terrible the solution would be."

On 27 October the confrontation escalated alarmingly, when US Air Force Major Rudolf Anderson was shot down and killed in his F-102 fighter when he strayed into Cuban airspace. Further US reconnaissance aircraft attempting to ascertain the lie of the land were also fired upon from the ground, while at practically the same time, dangerous events were occurring beneath the waters of the Caribbean. The US naval destroyer USS Beale had tracked down the Soviet submarine B-59 and begun dropping depth charges on it, scoring several hits. However, the Beale's crew didn't know the B-59 was carrying a 15-kiloton nuclear torpedo. Running out of air and surrounded by ships that wouldn't allow it to surface, the B-59's officers came horrendously close to desperately launching their payload before Captain Vasili Arkhipov managed to persuade his comrades to stand down and surrender. He may well have saved the world in the process.

As all this was occurring, Kennedy received another letter from Khrushchev offering to withdraw his weapons from Cuba if the US would do the same in Turkey. The attacks on the US planes had not been officially sanctioned by the Russians, but had been on the orders of commanders acting independently. The USSR seemed dangerously close to losing control of its own forces, and if that happened, catastrophic consequences might have been on the cards.

Kennedy replied to Khrushchev accepting his terms: pledging the US would never again invade Cuba if the Russian warheads were removed and, in a private addendum, agreeing to remove the USA's own missiles threatening the USSR from Turkey. Khrushchev revealed later that Kennedy also offered to remove the US's nuclear arsenal from Italy: a symbolic gesture only, since the weapons in Italy were obsolete at the time.

At 9am on 28 October, a message from Khrushchev was broadcast stating that work at the Russian weapon sites in Cuba would cease immediately, and that the arsenal would be dismantled and returned to the USSR. A very relieved President Kennedy responded to the broadcast immediately, promising to honour the agreement and calling Khrushchev's decision "an important and constructive contribution to peace."

Kennedy signing the Cuba Quarantine Proclamation

22 October
Kennedy informs UK PM Harold MacMillan of the ongoing crisis and writes to Khrushchev. In the letter, Kennedy writes: "Not you or any other sane man would [...] deliberately plunge the world into war which no country could win." He also makes a public address on TV.

23 October
The US 'quarantine' ships move into place around Cuba, while Soviet submarines lurk nearby. Kennedy asks Khrushchev to prevent any Russian vessels from approaching Cuba. Robert Kennedy visits the Soviet Embassy to meet with their ambassador.

24 October
Khrushchev responds to Kennedy's letters with hostility, complaining the US is using intimidation. "You are no longer appealing to reason," says the Soviet premier. "You are threatening that if we do not give in to your demands you will use force."

25 October
Kennedy writes to Khrushchev urging a Russian withdrawal from Cuba, and rejects UN Secretary General U. Thant's proposal of a 'cooling-off period', as Soviet missiles would remain in Cuba. Heated debates between the US and the USSR take place.

26 October
Castro writes to Khrushchev urging him not to back down, even if it means making a stand with catastrophic force. But Khrushchev contacts Kennedy to suggest a solution: the USA's removal of its own nuclear weapons from Turkey and Italy in exchange for the USSR's withdrawal from Cuba.

27 October
A US U-2 plane is shot down over Cuban airspace by Soviet missiles, and the pilot is killed. Meanwhile, a Russian submarine with a nuclear warhead aboard is attacked. Robert Kennedy secretly meets with the Soviet ambassador and cautious terms are agreed between them.

28 October
Radio Moscow announces the USSR has agreed to leave Cuba on the understanding that the US can never again attempt an invasion, and that US WMDs will be removed from sites near Russia. Castro is furious to learn the news from public radio.

THE HOTLINE It's good to talk

Pictured in the popular imagination as a red telephone, the Moscow-Washington hotline has never been a phone at all. It began life as a Teletype system, and kept that form for two decades until it was replaced with fax machines. Since 2008 it's been a secure computer link for email messages.

The hotline was set up immediately after the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1963, linking the Pentagon directly to the Kremlin, so that immediate communication can begin should any hostilities or 'misunderstandings' arise. During the Crisis it dangerously often took many hours for the US to translate and decode Khruschev's messages.

While it seems like a sensible idea, Kennedy was criticised by the Republican Party of the time over the hotline's implementation. The accusation was that Kennedy would alienate his "proven allies" by speaking to his "sworn enemies" first!

Castro meanwhile, who had not been consulted by either side, was furious to learn the news from the radio.

The US 'quarantine' of Cuba didn't end immediately, with aerial reconnaissance continuing to monitor whether the Soviets were packing up as promised. These missions were thankfully uneventful, and the Russian missiles and their supporting equipment were successfully loaded onto eight ships, leaving Cuban waters between 5 and 9 November. The blockade officially ended on 20 November and the USA removed its nuclear missiles from Turkey the following April. Castro may have been angry, and Soviet-Cuban relations significantly cooled, but the fact was that his position had been thoroughly strengthened by the Crisis. The US couldn't now attack Cuba - or Fidel Castro personally - without breaking the terms of their own peace treaty and risking the full weight of Russian reprisal.

In the aftermath of the Crisis, the Moscow-Washington hotline was set up, directly connecting the two political superpowers to facilitate easier negotiation should such a dire situation ever occur again. Major Rudolf Anderson remained the only combatant killed during the standoff (although a further 18 personnel died in crashes and accidents) and his body was returned to the States and buried in South Carolina with full military honours.

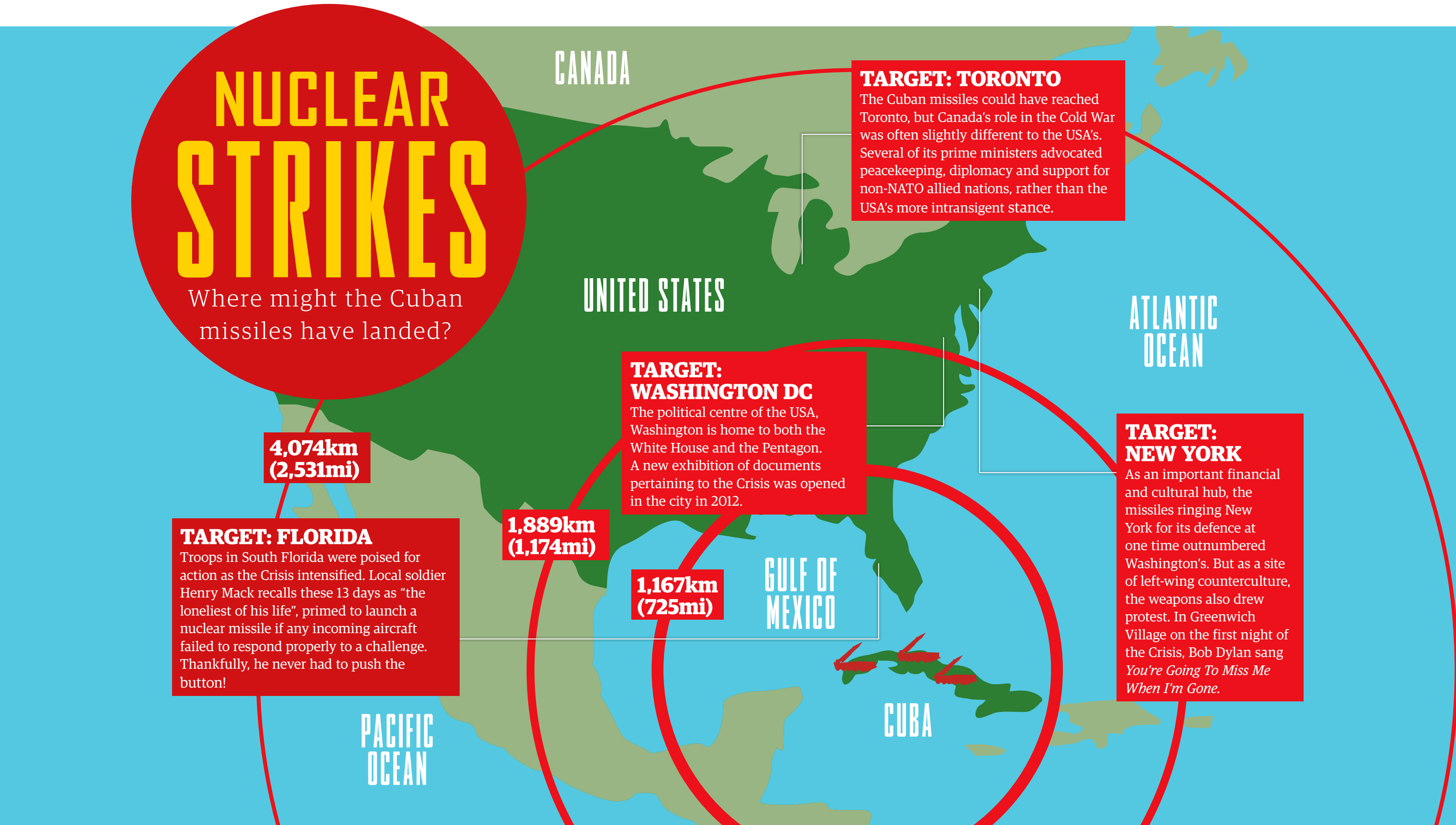
While Castro was reasonably secure, neither the US nor the USSR came out of the Crisis covered in glory. Khrushchev remained in power in the Soviet Union for two more years, but his eventual ousting was directly attributable to the embarrassment he and his country had suffered in Cuba, and the Politburo's perception of him as having managed the situation ineptly.

Meanwhile, while the US publicly attempted to sell the outcome as a victory, it was also conflicted. US Air Force General Curtis Le May for example, although his was a minority opinion, called the Cuban Missile Crisis "the greatest defeat in [US] history." Le May had stridently argued for an invasion of Cuba from the earliest moments of the crisis, and continued to do so after the Russians' withdrawal. "We could have gotten not only the missiles out of Cuba, we could have gotten the Communists out of Cuba at that time," he was still railing 25 years later.

In the end, it was perhaps humanity itself that won the Cuban Missile Crisis, receiving in the process an urgent wake-up call that

NUCLEAR STRIKES

Where might the Cuban missiles have landed?



TARGET: TORONTO

The Cuban missiles could have reached Toronto, but Canada's role in the Cold War was often slightly different to the USA's. Several of its prime ministers advocated peacekeeping, diplomacy and support for non-NATO allied nations, rather than the USA's more intransigent stance.

TARGET: WASHINGTON DC

The political centre of the USA, Washington is home to both the White House and the Pentagon. A new exhibition of documents pertaining to the Crisis was opened in the city in 2012.

TARGET: NEW YORK

As an important financial and cultural hub, the missiles ringing New York for its defence at one time outnumbered Washington's. But as a site of left-wing counterculture, the weapons also drew protest. In Greenwich Village on the first night of the Crisis, Bob Dylan sang *You're Going To Miss Me When I'm Gone.*

TARGET: FLORIDA

Troops in South Florida were poised for action as the Crisis intensified. Local soldier Henry Mack recalls these 13 days as "the loneliest of his life", primed to launch a nuclear missile if any incoming aircraft failed to respond properly to a challenge. Thankfully, he never had to push the button!

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

The three leaders state their cases

"In our discussions and exchanges [...] the one thing that has most concerned me has been the possibility that your government would not correctly understand the will and determination of the United States in any given situation, since I have not assumed that you or any other sane man would, in this nuclear age, deliberately plunge the world into war which it is crystal clear no country could win and which could only result in catastrophic consequences to the whole world."

Kennedy to Khrushchev, 22 Oct 1962

"You, Mr President, are not declaring a quarantine, but rather are setting forth an ultimatum and threatening that if we do not give in to your demands you will use force. Consider what you are saying! And you want to persuade me to agree to this! [...] You are no longer appealing to reason, but wish to intimidate us."

Khrushchev to JFK, 24 Oct 1962

"The Soviet Union must never allow circumstances in which the imperialists could carry out a nuclear first strike against it. [If] the imperialists carry out an invasion of Cuba - a brutal act in violation of universal and moral law - then that would be the moment to eliminate this danger forever, in an act of the most legitimate self-defence. However harsh and terrible the solution, there would be no other."

Castro to Khrushchev, 26 Oct 1962

the balance of international power was being juggled between two super-states who had the capacity to annihilate one another at a moment's notice, likely taking everyone else with them. Conservative estimates suggest casualties of a nuclear war between the US and USSR would have numbered in the hundreds of millions.

Scarily enough, however, the famous Doomsday Clock, which provides a symbolic, visual representation in 'minutes to midnight' of how close the world is at any given time to a politically related global catastrophe, didn't move during the Crisis, since it happened faster than the clock's board could react. Immediately before the Crisis it stood at seven minutes to midnight, and afterward it moved back to 12, the world deemed a safer place for all, thanks to the treaty. Today, the Doomsday Clock's hands stand at two minutes to midnight, 'thanks' to the lack of global action to reduce nuclear stockpiles, the potential for regional conflict, and the effects of avoidable climate change. The idea of mutually assured destruction may in modern times feel like an anachronism belonging firmly in the past. But some sources suggest it's closer than ever.

U.S. AIR FORCE

Nuclear missiles like this Jupiter rocket were placed in Turkey and Italy

THE CIA VERSUS COMMUNISM

Inside Operation Condor, the deadly US-backed programme to purge South America of the red menace

WRITTEN BY BEN BIGGS

In the 1970s and 1980s, most of South America was a dangerous place to be for those that leaned towards the left of the political spectrum. Anyone who was regarded as an intellectual, or acted as a union leader – in fact, anyone in a position to rally people to their side and challenge the political parties of certain states – was a target. With much of the power on the continent held by military dictators, dissidents were suppressed with the threat of torture and death. These regimes shared common political opponents, so, in 1974, the heads of the intelligence agencies of Chile, Uruguay, Argentina, Paraguay and Bolivia met with the leader of Chile's secret police, Manuel Contreras, to draw up a plan: Operation Condor.

Named after the world's largest carrion bird, Condor was officially a mandate that allowed each country to target political exiles and armed groups across their borders, but it ultimately extended to families and friends of dissidents, political activists, teachers and more. Thousands were kidnapped, tortured and murdered, and behind the scenes was the US Central Intelligence Agency, providing financial, covert and even military support for the regimes of Chilean dictator General Augusto Pinochet and his allies.

The CIA's goal was to subvert communism in South America at all costs and gain leverage for US business interests where it could, even if that meant lending its tacit support to military juntas and overlooking the oppression and murder of innocent people. Orlando Letelier – Chilean ambassador to the United States, member of the Chilean Socialist Party and concentration camp survivor – was Augusto Pinochet's most powerful and outspoken critic. This made him a prime target, and on 21 September 1976, Chile's secret police, the Dirección de Inteligencia Nacional (DINA), was emboldened by a covert agreement with high-level US intelligence officials to operate beyond its borders. As Letelier drove through the embassy district in Washington, DC, a plastic bomb hidden underneath his car exploded. The force of the blast went up into the driver's seat, killing Letelier and his US co-worker Ronni Karpen Moffitt, while Moffitt's husband, in the back seat, was injured.

This was neither the first nor the last politically motivated assassination by General Pinochet's regime, but it was the first of its kind on US soil. The hit had been ordered by Pinochet and the perpetrator was professional assassin Michael Townley, a US expatriate working for the DINA

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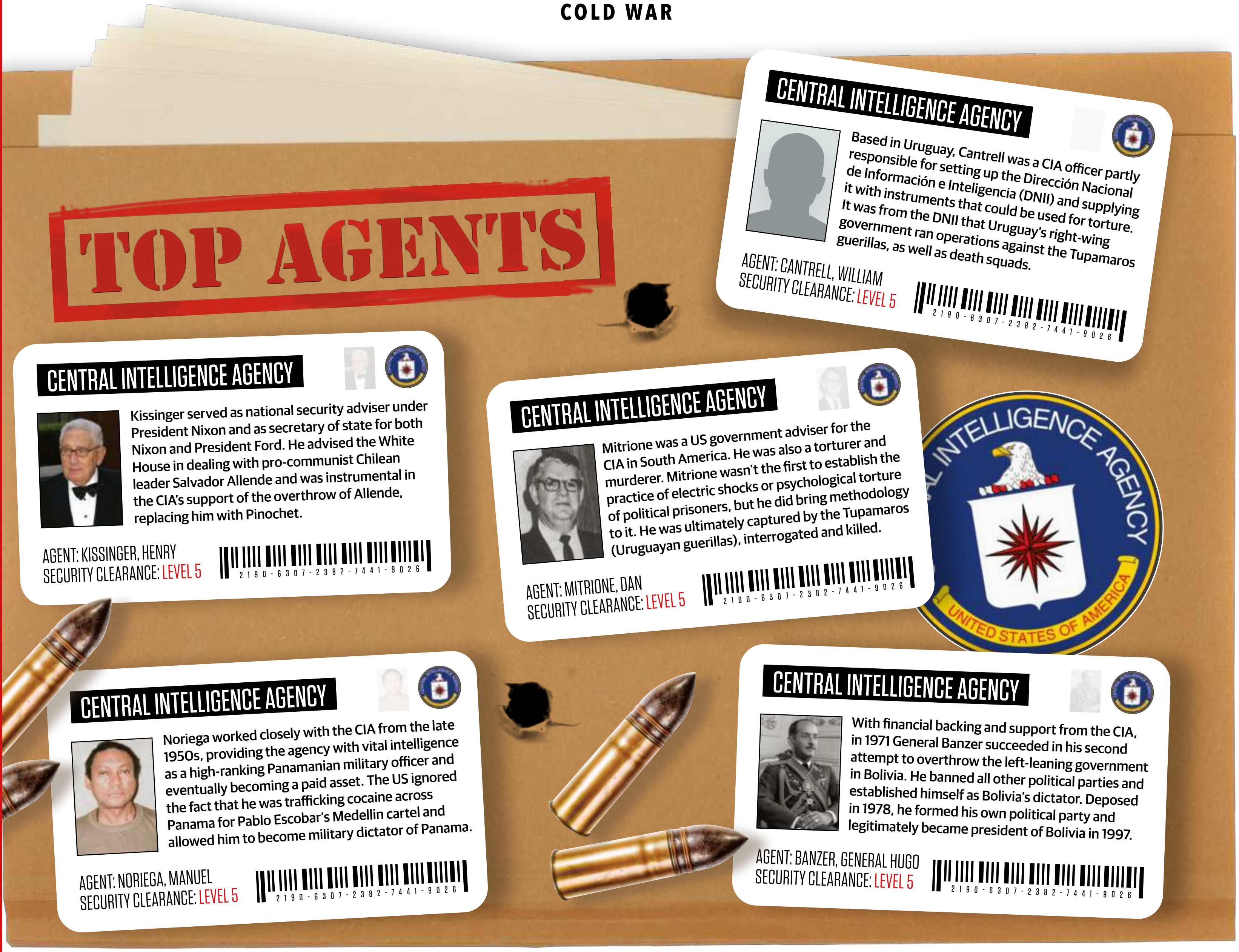


TOP AGENTS

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Based in Uruguay, Cantrell was a CIA officer partly responsible for setting up the Dirección Nacional de Información e Inteligencia (DNII) and supplying it with instruments that could be used for torture. It was from the DNII that Uruguay's right-wing government ran operations against the Tupamaros guerillas, as well as death squads.

AGENT: CANTRELL, WILLIAM
SECURITY CLEARANCE: LEVEL 5

2190 - 6307 - 2382 - 7441 - 9026

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Kissinger served as national security adviser under President Nixon and as secretary of state for both Nixon and President Ford. He advised the White House in dealing with pro-communist Chilean leader Salvador Allende and was instrumental in the CIA's support of the overthrow of Allende, replacing him with Pinochet.

AGENT: KISSINGER, HENRY
SECURITY CLEARANCE: LEVEL 5

2190 - 6307 - 2382 - 7441 - 9026

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Mitrione was a US government adviser for the CIA in South America. He was also a torturer and murderer. Mitrione wasn't the first to establish the practice of electric shocks or psychological torture of political prisoners, but he did bring methodology to it. He was ultimately captured by the Tupamaros (Uruguayan guerillas), interrogated and killed.

AGENT: MITRIONE, DAN
SECURITY CLEARANCE: LEVEL 5

2190 - 6307 - 2382 - 7441 - 9026

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Noriega worked closely with the CIA from the late 1950s, providing the agency with vital intelligence as a high-ranking Panamanian military officer and eventually becoming a paid asset. The US ignored the fact that he was trafficking cocaine across Panama for Pablo Escobar's Medellin cartel and allowed him to become military dictator of Panama.

AGENT: NORIEGA, MANUEL
SECURITY CLEARANCE: LEVEL 5

2190 - 6307 - 2382 - 7441 - 9026

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

With financial backing and support from the CIA, in 1971 General Banzer succeeded in his second attempt to overthrow the left-leaning government in Bolivia. He banned all other political parties and established himself as Bolivia's dictator. Deposed in 1978, he formed his own political party and legitimately became president of Bolivia in 1997.

AGENT: BANZER, GENERAL HUGO
SECURITY CLEARANCE: LEVEL 5

2190 - 6307 - 2382 - 7441 - 9026

who led a team of anti-Castro Cuban exiles. There are strong indications the CIA, though it had no direct involvement in the bombing, knew about the assassination order many weeks in advance. Yet the agency did nothing to try to stop it.

This period in history, known as the Cold War, is characterised by the nuclear arms race between the Soviet Union and the US, portentous political speeches, and tense stand-offs in the streets of Berlin and the waters around Cuba, but like an iceberg, the Cold War had a lot more going on beneath the surface. The CIA took an active role in preserving democracy and stamping out the biggest political bogeyman of the day, communism, but if the former had to be sacrificed in the name of the latter, so be it.

In fact, the US has a long history of helping to shape the political fates of other countries - even before the CIA played its part in propping up Pinochet's regime. In 1946, the School of the Americas was established in the US-run Panama Canal Zone as the Latin American Training Centre - Ground Division, ostensibly to school local brass in the US methods of warfare. In the aftermath of the Cuban Revolution, the school's remit changed dramatically and military figures from across Latin America - some of them future dictators - would go to learn the brutal counter-insurgency techniques that could help the US hold back the Red Tide they saw around every corner.

> "THE US HAS A LONG HISTORY OF HELPING TO SHAPE THE POLITICAL FATES OF OTHER COUNTRIES"

Haitian dictator 'Papa Doc' Duvalier handed the 'president for life' title to his son when he died in 1971

Chileans stage a peaceful protest in Santiago calling for justice for Orlando Letelier

CHILE
NECESITA
JUSTICIA
ESPINOZA
CARCEL

At around the same time that voices were raised in protest on the streets of Cuba's capital, Havana, Guatemala was enjoying the fruits of freedom, having shrugged off dictator Jorge Ubico and the shackles that US business the United Fruit Company imposed on the people in 1946. The new Guatemalan government redistributed land to farmers, gave power to unions and created literacy programmes. President Juan Arévalo's politics were capitalist, but the move away from the political right both alarmed the US and put a huge dent in a business that had profited enormously from slavish labour practices.

The CIA recruited dozens of opponents to Arévalo, denounced Guatemala and spread propaganda that the country had been infiltrated by communists. Then, in 1954, a CIA-backed invasion led by exiled Lieutenant Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas overthrew the government and installed Armas as president. This was a turning point for the White House: despite international criticism, the powerbrokers on Capitol Hill were starting to see how the CIA could be used to subvert other nations where diplomatic sweet-talking, aid and rebukes failed. Someone else had made the same observation: Ernesto 'Che' Guevara, who escaped from Guatemala City and went on to join the Cuban Revolution as Castro's right-hand man, travelling to Latin America and Africa as a freewheeling agent of insurrection.

In the two decades leading to the 1974 meeting in Chile, military juntas spread like a virus across the Caribbean and the Cone of South America. In the same year as the Armas coup, General Alfredo Stroessner seized power in Paraguay, then either ensured he was the only candidate in 30 years of elections or rigged them. In Brazil, President João Goulart was overthrown by General Olympio Mourão Filho in 1964, and in 1971, anti-communist General Hugo Banzer wore his political nemesis – President Juan José Torres – down with a series of coups that won him the dictatorship of Bolivia. In Uruguay, President Juan María Bordaberry orchestrated a civic-military coup in June 1973, and Pinochet took control of Chile three months later.

This apparent domino effect was no coincidence. If the Central Intelligence Agency wasn't wielding the might of the US budget to directly fund the juntas – supplying them with arms, spreading propaganda or feeding them vital intelligence – then it was keeping a covert eye on the situation as it unfolded and intervening only if it looked like the Reds were in danger of getting the upper hand.

This was certainly the case in Haiti in 1958, where the self-appointed 'president for life' François 'Papa Doc' Duvalier quelled an uprising with CIA support. Despite reservations about its dictatorial ruler, who increasingly styled himself after the Vodou spirit, or loa, of death, Baron Samedi, the proximity of the island to Cuba and Papa Doc's anti-Castro sentiment meant the US would condone the awful status quo in Haiti as long as it remained a frontline buffer against communism. Duvalier and his successor went on to murder tens of thousands and plunged a once-prosperous country into poverty.

Agent Daniel Mitrione had been operating in Brazil for much of the time between 1960 and 1967, where President João Goulart was doing his best to make sweeping social economic reforms to spread wealth and promote education. As a man with considerable private finances, President Goulart was anti-communist but leaned to the political left. Too far to the left for the liking of US foreign policy adviser Henry Kissinger, who sent teams of psychological warfare agents (Psy-ops) to spread malicious rumours and misinformation about Goulart, softening Brazil up in preparation for a military coup.

While the propaganda took hold, the CIA began communicating with senior executive Jack Burford of the Hanna Mining Company, which had stakes in Brazil's mineral companies. Burford travelled to Brazil for a secret meeting with Goulart - one that would line the Brazilian president's pockets and profit both the US and Hanna Mining - but Goulart rejected the deal. Thus, President Lyndon Johnson green-lit the coup to overthrow João Goulart, and he was duly exiled by Brazil's generals under the shadow of a nearby US Navy taskforce.

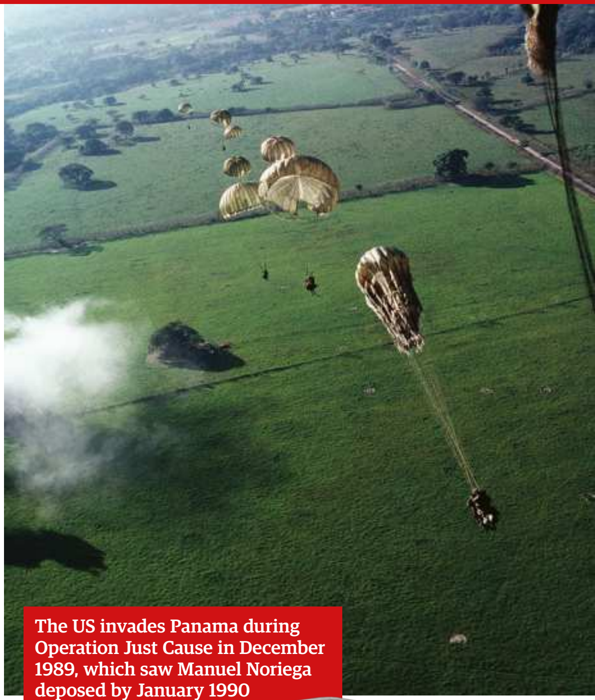
Mitrione stayed behind to help remove remaining Goulart supporters and assist Brazilian police in the interrogation techniques in which he excelled. He was then sent to Uruguay in 1969, where he honed his 'skills' by allegedly torturing beggars that he snatched off the streets, deploying his methods even against pregnant women with the clinical efficiency of a surgeon. Manuel Hevia Cosculluela, a Cuban double agent, worked for the CIA under Mitrione's supervision, often observing him. Cosculluela later wrote about his experiences when he returned to Cuba: "There was no interrogation, only a demonstration of the effects of different voltages on the different parts of the human body, as well as demonstrating the use of a drug, which induces vomiting - I don't know why or what for - and another chemical substance. The four of them died."

Cosculluela also described some of the twisted torture theories that Mitrione discussed with him. First came the 'softening up' phase of beating and insults, no questions asked, followed by relentless beatings. Then the interrogation began. "The precise pain, in the precise place, in the precise amount, for the desired effect," was Mitrione's method. "You must always leave him some hope, a distant light… it may be good to prolong the session a little to apply another softening-up," he continued. "Not to extract information now, but only as a political measure, to create a healthy fear of meddling in subversive activities."

The people of Argentina arguably suffered more than any other South American country as a result of Operation Condor, with its death toll peaking at three times Chile's estimated 10,000 murder victims. Even before the Argentinian dictator Jorge Videla took over in 1976 with the support of the CIA and the blessing of US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, Videla was waging what was known as the 'Dirty War' against the Argentinian people as a senior military officer. The targets of his death squads included Marxists, left-wing activists and supporters of Argentina's previous - democratically elected - president.

His junta perpetrated a cultural genocide against students, priests, union members, artists and academics, waged inside concentration camps where Mitrione's methods were practised daily. Tales of abuse and torture were rife from the surviving victims. In 1979, Videla described the victims as "…not dead or alive… just disappeared," and indeed, many who went missing during this time have never been accounted for and are presumed dead.

The CIA was complicit in this 'Dirty War', and Henry Kissinger had been well aware of the Argentinian military's tactics since 1970. By



The US invades Panama during Operation Just Cause in December 1989, which saw Manuel Noriega deposed by January 1990

Pictured here in September 1973, General Pinochet was finally stripped of political immunity in 2004, although he died before he could be convicted

SCHOOL OF THE DICTATORS

Inside the CIA training camp for Latin American military officers

The seed of the principles that would guide the Latin American dictatorships of the 1970s would be planted in 1946 when the US army built the School of the Americas at Fort Gulick, Panama. Its motto, 'Libertad, Paz y Fraternidad' (Freedom, Peace and Fraternity), was, much like its name, a thinly disguised euphemism for what the School of the Americas actually promoted: anything but communism.

In 1961, as the Cold War amped up, it began to teach anti-communist counter-insurgency to South American military personnel. Some have suggested that in the early years this included torture methods. Its notorious graduates included Jorge Rafael Videla (Argentinian dictator from 1976-81), Hugo Banzer (Bolivian dictator from 1971-78), Manuel Contreras (head of Chile's secret police from 1973-77) and Manuel Noriega (Panamanian dictator from 1983-89).

The list from Operation Condor's era alone is a long one. All had involvement in the extensive human rights abuses perpetrated by the operation, all have blood on their hands, and yet few have been made accountable for the full extent of their crimes. Curiously, included in the School of the Americas alumni are members of Los Zetas, the powerful and notoriously violent Mexican crime cartel that favours intimidation and brutal assassination over bribery. In this case at the very least, the US clearly shot itself in the foot.

1976, US Congress had become concerned about the human rights abuses and was considering sanctions against Argentina. In a recently declassified transcript, Kissinger sought to reassure the visiting Argentinian foreign minister, Admiral César Augusto Guzzetti, that he had full US backing.

"I have an old-fashioned view that friends ought to be supported," said Kissinger. "What is not understood in the United States is that you have a civil war. We read about human rights problems, but not the context. The quicker you succeed the better... The human rights problem is a growing one... We want a stable situation. We won't cause you unnecessary difficulties. If you can finish before Congress gets back, the better. Whatever freedoms you could restore would help."

In 1999, US President Bill Clinton ordered the declassification and release of thousands of documents confirming that the CIA had intimate knowledge of Operation Condor and even some indirect involvement in the state-sanctioned murders and atrocities committed by Southern Cone juntas. The documents also showed that the CIA and the State Department had the intelligence to prevent the assassination of Orlando Letelier, among others, but allowed it to happen anyway.

Strictly speaking, Operation Condor was a success, for a time. Through a campaign of merciless repression and active elimination of political foes, the juntas of six Latin American countries held communism at bay. The US leadership at the time was able to show how it was winning the war against the Reds and at the same time support US business interests abroad, boosting its economy. But even without pragmatic hindsight, it was clearly unsustainable. The interpretation of a 'communist' had gone from far left-wing political activists and urban guerillas opposed to the regime, to people with views that didn't align with state ideology, to the friends and families of those people regardless of their political opinions. Pinochet and company were throwing the baby out with the bathwater in order to maintain absolute control.

Inevitably, as international attention focused on the horror unfolding across South America, the CIA pulled funding and support as the US weighed up the risk of being associated with human rights atrocities. By 1989, with the end of Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega's regime and the fall of the Iron Curtain, Condor came to an end. The CIA brushed another of its sordid engagements under the carpet and, for a while, that's where it stayed.

Interrogation techniques were taught at the School of the Americas in Fort Gulik, Panama

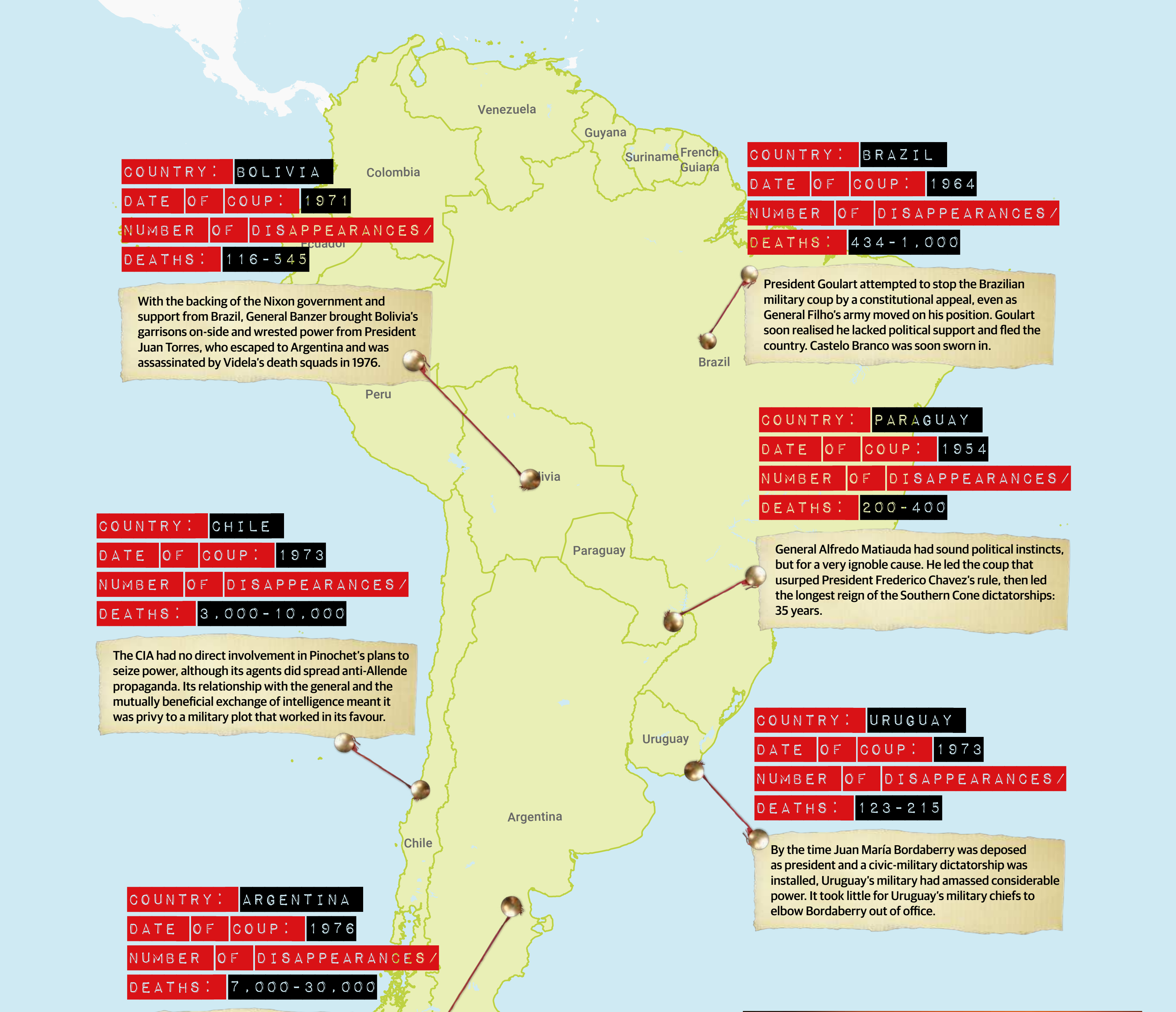
On the streets of Argentina, the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo still protest about their 'disappeared' children
APOYAMOS EL PROYECTO NACIONAL Y POPULAR

Military members of the Bolivian junta are sworn in with the support of Brazil and Peru

"THE US LEADERSHIP AT THE TIME WAS ABLE TO SHOW HOW IT WAS WINNING THE WAR AGAINST THE REDS"

CIA CRIMES IN SOUTH AMERICA

The bloody hand of Operation Condor claimed thousands of lives



COUNTRY: BOLIVIA
DATE OF COUP: 1971
NUMBER OF DISAPPEARANCES/DEATHS: 116-545

With the backing of the Nixon government and support from Brazil, General Banzer brought Bolivia's garrisons on-side and wrested power from President Juan Torres, who escaped to Argentina and was assassinated by Videla's death squads in 1976.

COUNTRY: BRAZIL
DATE OF COUP: 1964
NUMBER OF DISAPPEARANCES/DEATHS: 434-1,000

President Goulart attempted to stop the Brazilian military coup by a constitutional appeal, even as General Filho's army moved on his position. Goulart soon realised he lacked political support and fled the country. Castelo Branco was soon sworn in.

COUNTRY: CHILE
DATE OF COUP: 1973
NUMBER OF DISAPPEARANCES/DEATHS: 3,000-10,000

The CIA had no direct involvement in Pinochet's plans to seize power, although its agents did spread anti-Allende propaganda. Its relationship with the general and the mutually beneficial exchange of intelligence meant it was privy to a military plot that worked in its favour.

COUNTRY: PARAGUAY
DATE OF COUP: 1954
NUMBER OF DISAPPEARANCES/DEATHS: 200-400

General Alfredo Matiauda had sound political instincts, but for a very ignoble cause. He led the coup that usurped President Frederico Chavez's rule, then led the longest reign of the Southern Cone dictatorships: 35 years.

COUNTRY: URUGUAY
DATE OF COUP: 1973
NUMBER OF DISAPPEARANCES/DEATHS: 123-215

By the time Juan María Bordaberry was deposed as president and a civic-military dictatorship was installed, Uruguay's military had amassed considerable power. It took little for Uruguay's military chiefs to elbow Bordaberry out of office.

COUNTRY: ARGENTINA
DATE OF COUP: 1976
NUMBER OF DISAPPEARANCES/DEATHS: 7,000-30,000

The sixth Argentinian coup d'etat saw the overthrow of President Isabel Martínez de Peron by General Jorge Rafael Videla's military junta. The US supported the removal of the leftist guerillas via the CIA, who could have prevented the coup.

A mural of some of the many fathers and mothers who 'disappeared', in the 'House for Identity', Buenos Aires

© Alamy, Getty Images, FreeVectorMaps.com

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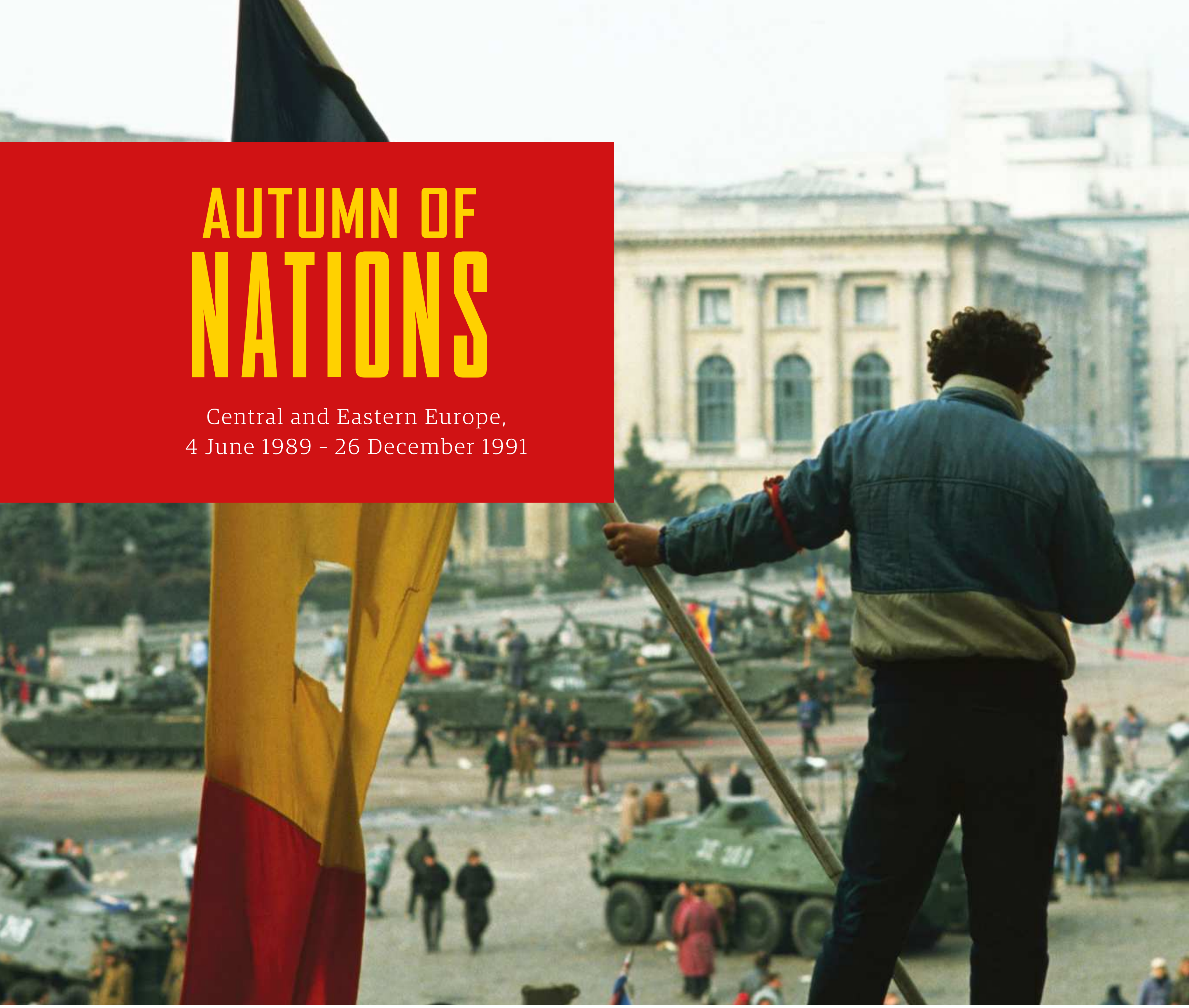
YOU ARE LEAVING
THE AMERICAN SECTOR
ВЫ ВЫЕЗ ИЗ
АМЕРИКАНСІ ЕКТОРА
VOU
DU SECT MERICAIN
SIE VERLASSEN DEN A ERIKANISCHEN SEKTOR
Friedrichstraße
Zimmerstraße



AUTUMN OF NATIONS

Central and Eastern Europe,
4 June 1989 - 26 December 1991

WHAT WAS IT?

Whether known as the Revolutions of 1989, the Fall of Nations or the Autumn of Nations, the two-year period that saw the dismantling of communist rule in Central and Eastern Europe changed the face of the continent forever. It began in Poland when a rash of strikes broke out, led by workers who were demanding that the Communist authorities legalise their trade union, Solidarity.

After intensive talks, Solidarity was recognised, and at the elections that followed, it swept parliament, capturing all but one of the Sejm's 100 seats. Faced with the political wipeout of the ruling regime, the Communists' political allies, the Democratic Party and the United People's Party, joined forces with Solidarity. His support gone and his administration in tatters, Prime Minister Czesław Kiszczak stepped down in favour of Tadeusz Mazowiecki, a supporter of democracy.

Across the country, the statues and memorials to communism were pulled down. With little resistance from the Soviet Union, Poland dissolved the Warsaw Pact and moved towards a new future of democracy.

WHAT WERE THE CONSEQUENCES?

With political triumph in Poland, across the communist strongholds of Central and Eastern Europe, people who had long been cut off from the rest of the world behind the Iron Curtain began to call for democracy.

In 1989, demonstrations in Hungary led to the dismantling of the literal Iron Curtain, a vast fence that marked Hungary's border with Austria. With freedom open to them, Hungarians flocked illegally into the West in their droves. Thousands of East Germans followed, and after the border was closed, East Germans protested in Leipzig ,despite running the risk of meeting with harsh government reprisals. Though authorities met them with violence, the people wouldn't be silenced and soon, 9,000 protesters had swelled to a crowd of 300,000. They couldn't be ignored.

When the iconic Berlin Wall, long asymbol of the divide between East and West, fell, it marked the beginning of the end for the communist powers and at the ballot box, they faced defeat. The Soviet Union dissolved in December 1991, bringing the once-impenetrable Iron Curtain down with it.

Image Source • Getty Images.

When the Berlin Wall fell, Checkpoint Charlie was no longer a place to be feared, but a tourist destination

YOU ARE LEAVING
THE AMERICAN SECTOR
ge Source • TSGT FERNANDO SERNA

Tired of the daily hardships of life under communist rule, the people of Poland wanted democracy

WHO WAS INVOLVED?

Image Source • Cherie Cullen.

Lech Wałęsa
1943 - present

In 1990, Lech Wałęsa, the leader of Solidarity, was elected president of Poland and oversaw its transition from communism to democracy.

Image Source • Defense Threat Reduction Agency

Mikhail Gorbachev
1931 - present

Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev presided over the swift unravelling of the once seemingly all-powerful Soviet Union.

Image Source • Eric The Fish from UK.

Harald Jäger
1943 - present

Lieutenant Colonel Harald Jäger was in charge of Berlin Wall passport control. On 9 November 1989, he opened the crossing.

TIMELINE

STOCZNIA GDAŃSKA
im. LENINA

Start of talks
31 August 1988

Lech Wałęsa, the leader of Solidarity, who had previously been imprisoned, is invited to talks with Communist authorities in Warsaw.

Image Source • European Solidarity Centre.

In agreement
6 February 1989

The Round Table Agreement is signed. This legalises Solidarity and puts in place plans for partly free elections in Poland.

Image Source • Adrian Grycuk.

Clear winner
4 June 1989

Solidarity wins at the polls by a landslide, claiming 99 out of 100 seats. One seat is won by an independent electoral candidate.

Image Source • Szczebrzeszynski.

Free to flee
2 May 1989

Hungary begins dismantling its border with Austria, allowing thousands of people to flee communist regimes in Czechoslovakia.

Image Source • Cuchulainn, 20. Jun. 2009.

Undeterred
23 October 1989

300,000 pro-democracy protesters gather in Leipzig despite threats of violent retaliation. They call for open borders and freedom.

Image Source • Bundesarchiv.

The wall falls
9 November 1989

Harald Jäger disobeys orders and opens the crossing point on the Berlin Wall. The fall of the Berlin Wall begins.

Image Source • Bundesarchiv, Bild 183-1989-1110-018 / Oberst, Klaus.

FALL OF THE BERLIN WALL

Discover more about the fall of the Berlin Wall with this captivating eyewitness account from Andreas Ramos

WRITTEN BY DOM RESEIGH-LINCOLN

For 28 years, the Berlin Wall stood resolute, an imposing symbol of the Soviet Union's cast-iron hold over much of Eastern Europe. For almost three decades, the citizens of the Wall's Eastern side lived under the watchful eye of the German Democratic Republic, a semi-autonomous government laid in place by its Soviet masters in Moscow. Heavily guarded and laced with barbed wire, the 155-kilometre (96-mile)-long, 3.6-metre (11.8-foot)-high structure ensured the German capital remained divided through the fearful years of the Cold War. No East German was permitted to cross the border into the West; the sights and sounds of a free Berlin a few hundred yards away a constant reminder of how fractured Europe had become in the decades following the end of World War II. But as the 1980s drew to a close, this symbol of division became the breaking point in European socialism. Based in Denmark at the time, science and technology student Andreas Ramos travelled to Berlin to witness first-hand the frustrations of a continent boil over in the streets of a divided city.

"When I went to study at Heidelberg (in southwest Germany) in 1978 no one in government, academia or the general public could imagine the Berlin Wall would ever fall or the Soviet Union could collapse", explains Ramos. "NATO was built on the premise of eternal conflict with the USSR. But by the mid-1980s, after the USSR's failure in Afghanistan, it was clear the Soviet Union had to change. But collapse? They simply hadn't planned for change. It all happened on the streets, not within the government. I was in Germany for seven years and then went to Denmark to work on a doctoral dissertation. I'd been to Berlin many times and had friends there. From the edge of the Wall we watched everything, and when the East Germans began to tear down the wall, we joined them."

A month prior, the first metaphorical cracks in the Soviet Union's hold on Eastern Europe started to show. Communication between Moscow and the German Democratic Republic (GDR) government led by hardline party leader Erich Honecker had broken down as the Motherland struggled to contain its rapidly unravelling vision for a united socialist future. Up until this point, the borders of the Eastern Bloc remained intact, but the growing pressure from refugees attempting to flee the failing communist system became too much for the neighbouring Hungarian government to ignore. On 19 August 1989, Hungary effectively opened its physical borders and allowed over 13,000 East Germans to surge across the border into Austria. As the refugees sought sanctuary in the West German embassy, it sent a shockwave through the infrastructure of the Eastern Bloc; a wave that would reach all the way to Berlin and beyond.

Back in the capital, the streets were more alive than ever. A previously morose and subdued city was now bustling as its citizens took up arms in peaceful protests. East Berliners could

TIMELINE OF A NATION UNITING

19 August 1989

Prior to the Wall's physical collapse, the political landscape regarding it is already falling apart. The opening of Hungary's borders with Austria can be seen as the initial catalyst.

4 September

Following a similar influx of refugees into a now-open Czechoslovakia, a series of peaceful protests are organised across East Berlin.

18 October

East German leader Erick Honecker is forced to resign by his own party following his refusal to change the city's immigration policies.

4 November

With Erick Honecker and his 'shoot to kill' edict removed, the Peaceful Revolution of 1989 reaches its height. The chant, "We are the people!" echoes through the streets of East German cities.

9.30am 9 November

Crowds begin to gather all along the Berlin Wall as rumours of a policy change run amok.

1.00pm

The GDR holds a press conference where it announces all GDR citizens are permitted to cross over to West Berlin.

5.05pm

The first few East Berliners make their way into the West as guards quickly lose control of the situation.

8.00pm

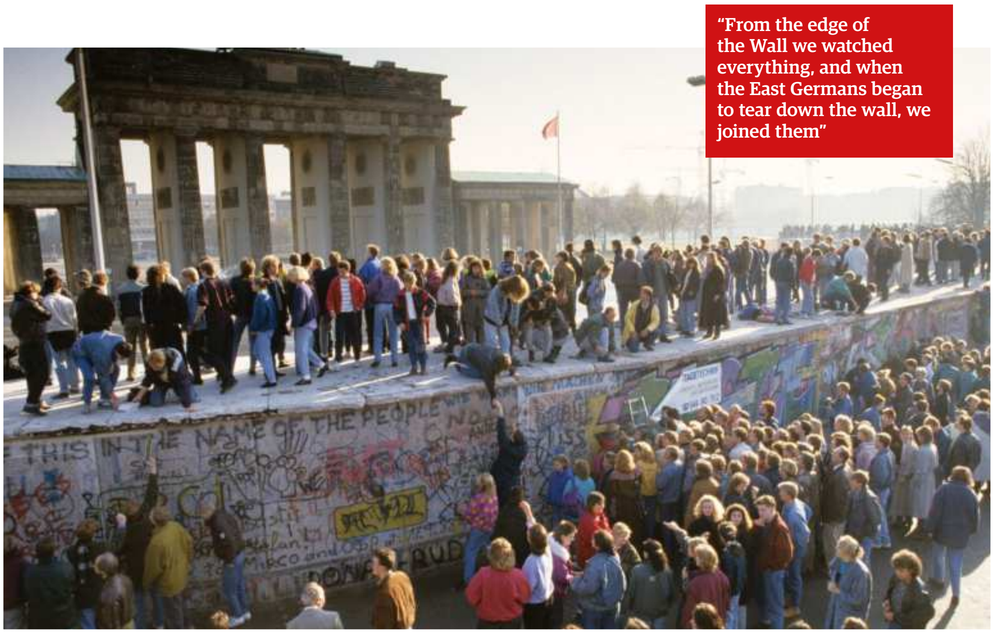
Huge crowds gather at the Berlin Wall, hacking it to pieces as the media televises the scenes around the world.

22 December

Despite multiple breaches in the Wall, the Brandenburg Gate is officially opened for all Berliners to pass through.

3 October 1990

With the Wall itself almost completely demolished, East and West Germany are united in a formal ceremony. The US, British and French governments relinquish stewardship of West Berlin into the hands of a new united and democratic German government.


THIS IS IN THE NAME OF THE PEOPLE

"From the edge of the Wall we watched everything, and when the East Germans began to tear down the wall, we joined them"

sense the government was starting to unravel. The resignation of Erich Honecker, the staunch idealist who had stated only months before that the Berlin Wall would stand tall for a century to come, had galvanised the nation's hope for change. The 'Peaceful Revolution', as it came to be known, reached its height on 4 November 1989, an event that attracted Ramos and many others to Berlin. Arriving on the afternoon of 9 November, Ramos could sense an air of tension, but also one of burgeoning hope. "The build-up wasn't just in Germany; it was the whole year of revolutions across Eastern Europe. The Soviet Bloc was disintegrating, one nation after another", comments Ramos. "As we made our way into West Germany we could all sense that the whole continent was about to change forever."

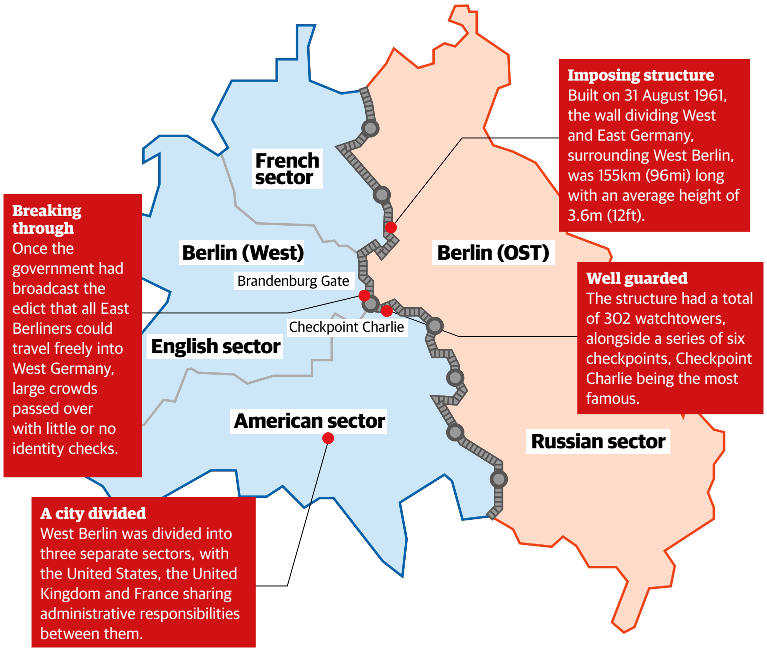
That evening the inevitable finally became a reality. In the weeks since Honecker's forced resignation, his successors had attempted to rejuvenate the party's reputation by holding a series of press conferences that promised radical changes to national policies. Shortly before that day's official press conference, GDR's spokesman Günter Schabowski was handed a small note that confirmed all East Berliners were now allowed to cross the border into the West with the proper identification. However, without any other explanation to help him digest this news, Schabowski was thrust in front of a ravenous media. One garbled and mostly improvised statement later and it was official: the once impenetrable gates of East Germany were opening. The problem was, this news wasn't communicated down to the guards and officials manning the many guard posts along the wall. With frustration building among the crowds of East Berliners, the situation was a powder keg waiting to explode.

As the news started to flood across East Berlin, hundreds of people began to gather at each checkpoint demanding to let through into West Berlin. To Colombian-born Ramos, it was utter chaos, but it was chaos charged by hope rather than anger. "It was November and it was extremely cold that night, but in the excitement everyone was milling around in anticipation. Restaurants and bars, which by law were meant to close, were all open well into the early hours. Laws became meaningless that night," he recalls. "People came from all over Europe: we spoke in many languages. There were British, French, Spaniards, Italians, Greeks and many Scandinavians, plus, of course, the Germans. That night, Berlin was Europe. Remember; at the time, there were no cell phones, no video, no Twitter, no Facebook, no selfies, so remarkably, there aren't that many photos of that night. Today, of course, there would be billions of photos."

As Ramos and his friends approached the Wall itself, the air seemed alight with a mixture of confusion, frustration and apprehension. "As the news of the law changing spread it became a massive sense of relief, of 'it's over', of excitement. After decades of baseless promises from politicians and pointless dreams of uniting of families, it suddenly became possible in a delirious joy", he says. "Someone wrote it was the world's largest street party, and it was. 5 million people in one city. East Germans flooded across the borders and went visiting throughout all of Germany. The cities declared free bus and streetcar tickets for them, free museums and zoos, free everything for the visiting East Germans. It was an incredible time." The Wall was suddenly no longer the impenetrable barrier to another world. East Berliners were flooding into the other side of the city while others started attacking the wall with any tool they could find. The military looked on dumbfounded. Some of them even joined in the demolition job. "It was clear that both governments, East and West German, plus the US military, had lost control", comments Ramos. "They stood by helplessly, watching everyone bustle around. I talked with East German soldiers who told me their rifles were empty. No bullets. They looked forward to coming across the border. West German police, who are always so orderly and authoritative, just watched. They didn't know what to do; this had never been planned." He adds, "many of us pushed through the wall and went to the East Berlin side. It was mutual: West Germans and East Germans tore down the wall together to unite themselves once more." Breaking down the wall itself was no easy task, but it became a cathartic coming together of a nation suddenly reunited in matter of hours. Citizens from East and West gathered on each side to start hacking away, pulling away chunks and lofting them on high, like mementos from a fun day out. Ramos was right in the middle of the crowds tearing into the wall that evening. "Opening the Wall went on for hours", he remarks. "It was made of thick slabs of concrete, nine or twelve feet (three or four metres) high. Small holes were made with hammers, but to open the wall so large numbers of people could pass, industrial machinery was needed. Somehow, West German construction companies showed up with jackhammers and cranes which broke apart the slabs and lifted them out of the way."

In the months that followed, Germany was unified as a single, free nation for the first time since the final shots of the Second World War and Europe - and the world - was changed forever. Germany would go on to become an economic superpower, but that chilly evening in Berlin has remained an iconic image of social and political upheaval. "It was one of the most astonishing events of my life. It was 25 years ago and I still remember so many moments, especially the mood", recalls Ramos on that historic day. "The fall of the Berlin Wall ended a chapter of European history reaching back more than a hundred years. However, it also opened a new chapter, and so far, we don't yet know what it's going to be or where it's going to lead."

WHERE IT HAPPENED



Imposing structure
Built on 31 August 1961, the wall dividing West and East Germany, surrounding West Berlin, was 155km (96mi) long with an average height of 3.6m (12ft).

Breaking through
Once the government had broadcast the edict that all East Berliners could travel freely into West Germany, large crowds passed over with little or no identity checks.

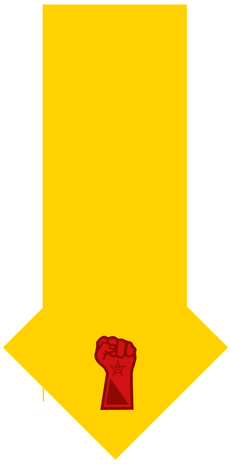
Well guarded
The structure had a total of 302 watchtowers, alongside a series of six checkpoints, Checkpoint Charlie being the most famous.

A city divided
West Berlin was divided into three separate sectors, with the United States, the United Kingdom and France sharing administrative responsibilities between them.

ORIGINS & AFTERMATH

At the end of World War II in 1945, Germany was split into four zones, each administered by one of the main Allied forces. Berlin was divided in two, with East Berlin absorbed into the increasing Soviet grip on Eastern Europe. In 1961, the semi-autonomous communist government the German Democratic Republic - under direction from the Kremlin - decreed that a new wall would be erected to physically divide the city in two, effectively cutting East Berliners off from the rest of the world. For 28 years, the Berlin Wall signified a city evolving in two very different directions. When the first East Berlin citizens passed the guard patrols into free West Berlin, it was the start of the breaking up of the Eastern Bloc and the first steps toward a unified Germany that would see it become one of the most robust economic powers in Europe.

Image Source • Manfred&Barbara Aulbach



A COMMUNIST COMEBACK

In the current political climate, could communism make a return to the world stage?

WRITTEN BY STEVE WRIGHT

Today, nations that embrace communism as a system of government are limited to a select few: China, Cuba, Vietnam and Laos. North Korea is sometimes included among this band, their state ideology of juche being recognised as a new interpretation of the Marxism and Leninism that drives the other countries.

Elsewhere in the world, communist activism varies. In India, the states of Kerala, Tripura and West Bengal have Marxist governments; in South Africa, its Communist Party is a partner in government, and Nepal is currently ruled by a majority communist government. Even in Europe and South America, where communist parties of influence are in a minority, there is a distinct presence in places like Belarus and Uruguay.

In Russia, the birthplace of communism, its legacy has been a complicated one. While it rejected the excesses brought about during the rule of Joseph Stalin after his death, it only became a democracy in 1993. Even then, while a backslide into communism hasn't taken place, it's hard to describe it as fully democratic in its government's current iteration. Elsewhere in Eastern Europe, the ghost of communism has been hard to shake off, with varying levels of optimism about their countries' progress since. A survey conducted by the Pew Research Centre in 2019 showed that fewer than half of Hungarians and Slovakians believed that their countries were better off than 30 years ago, while people from Poland, Lithuania and Czechia were generally more optimistic.

Whatever its original intentions, on some level it's also hard to disassociate communism with the catastrophic death tolls in the countries it has inhabited. Between 1917 and 1987, deaths linked with communist-caused upheaval in Russia are estimated to have been anywhere between six and 61 million. China's Great Leap Forward (1958-

A monument to Karl Marx in Moscow city centre

ПРОЛЕТАРИИ
ВСЕХ СТРАН,
СОЕДИНЯЙТЕСЬ!

62) resulted in a death toll of at least 45 million, and the Cambodian genocide between 1975 and 1979 resulted in between 1.5 and 2 million deaths. Whatever achievements proponents of communism put forward, its legacy is unavoidably stained blood red.

While it's hard to envisage a situation in the Western world where communism becomes a recognised form of government – the crumbling of the Berlin Wall in 1989 put paid to its stronghold in Eastern Europe – recent developments have seen a rejection of the old order. The spread of populism, galvanised by the election of 'strong-man' leaders like Donald Trump in the US and Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, has seen the emergence of an increasingly authoritarian form of government that while on the opposite political spectrum, has parallels with previous communist governments' leaders. This has subsequently seen political opposition retreat further to the left on the political spectrum accordingly, although this has usually been without success. The avowedly socialist Bernie Sanders garnered much popularity, but not enough to garner a Democratic nomination in 2020, and in the UK, left-wing Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn suffered defeat in the 2019 general election. Despite these countries' governments becoming arguably more right wing, the resulting opposing push to the left was ultimately not enough to generate effective opposition and suggest a comeback in the West for something akin to communism.

Ultimately, the future of communism will depend in large part on the prosperity of China – and of the subsequent decrease of it in the rest of the world. After all, communism first took root in a poverty- and debt-ridden Russia that saw its destitute population far removed from the lifestyle of their ruling elite, and mobilised to take action accordingly. While the doctrine's opposition to private ownership and the wealth of the individual make its compatibility with North America and Europe unlikely in their present condition, other, poorer countries might find themselves fertile ground for communism to take root. It's hard to discount the possibility that other countries might look to China's booming economy as a positive source of inspiration.

As of April 2023, the world is still recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic. This, combined with further economic uncertainty amid the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine, means a global recession has become all the more likely. It's possible that some nations may choose to punish their leaders for failing to adequately protect them from these crises and opt to follow the lead of China, Cuba, Vietnam et al.

A comeback for communism might seem unlikely, but then again, we live in unprecedented times. The possibility cannot be ignored…

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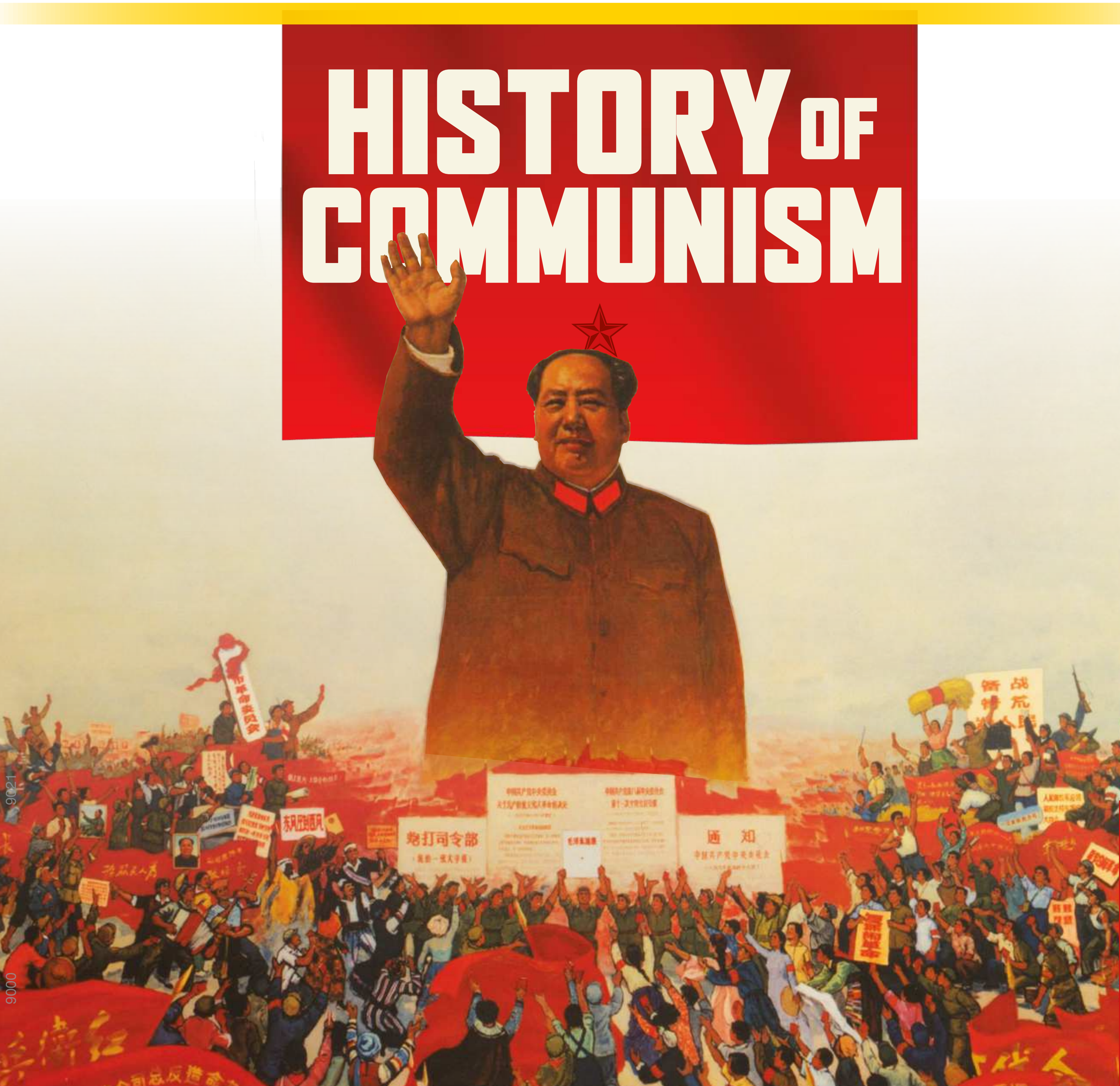
THE RISK OF MUTUALLY ASSURED DESTRUCTION

HISTORY OF COMMUNISM



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